

**PERIPHERAL DESIGNS: CHINA'S PURSUIT OF NEAR-ARCTIC
STATEHOOD AND THE RE-SHAPING OF GEOPOLITICS IN THE FAR
NORTH**

by
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Abstract

A rising China and a changing physical environment is forever altering existing Arctic governance systems. Using China's emergence as a self-described "Near Arctic" state as a guide, this thesis advances a theory that exclusionary practices by states and international organizations towards emerging actors in regions experiencing rapid globalization results in the unintended construction of peripheral influence systems led by the excluded. This concept is summarized as *exclusion-peripheralization*. In the process of highlighting the spectrum of China's developing Arctic ascendancy, several sub-themes inherent to contemporary Arctic geopolitics are also examined. 1) How science or knowledge-based 'territory' supplants traditional concepts of territorial-based legitimacy in international governance systems like the Arctic Council. 2) The role political anthropology plays as both contextual foundation and strategic tool in the interactions between established and emerging states. 3) The cyclic process whereby a 'new' region become increasingly international, how globalization in turn acts upon that space, and how state policy creation systems are themselves altered. Each of these factor into an enduring Arctic motif as a region of complex and oft-conflicting interests, specifically of exploitation versus sustainability and competition versus cooperation. Exclusion-peripheralization theory and these sub-themes are approached via the presentation of case studies on Sino-Nordic, Inuit, and Russian collaboration, in addition to commentary on the larger strategic backdrop, including United States policy and the influence of "transnational knowledge networks."¹ This thesis concludes China's Arctic activities,

¹ Rasmus Gjedssø Bertelsen, "The International Political Systemic Context of Arctic Marine Resource Governance," in *Arctic Marine Resource Government and Development*, ed. Niels Vestergaard, Brooks A. Kaiser, Linda Fernandez, Joan Nymand Larsen (Cham: Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG,

exemplified by its investment in polar science, infrastructure and trade development agreements with individual Arctic states, as well as other forms of norm-construction, are designed to establish a lasting, albeit non-territorial Chinese Arctic presence. This work concludes with policy recommendations, including commentary on the potential establishment of a new international Arctic governance regime, loosely modeled after the Antarctic Treaty; the use of political anthropology to enhance Arctic diplomatic engagement strategies; and from a U.S. perspective, the use of exclusion-peripheralization to maintain advantage in an evolving Arctic geopolitical environment.

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2018): 4; Bertelsen, “The GCC-Russia-China LNG Triangle: The Role of Transnational Knowledge Networks and Epistemic Communities to Govern Complex Systems,” *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies* 12, no. 4 (February 2019): 490-491, <https://doi.org/10.1080/25765949.2018.1564861>.

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Introduction

“True civilization will not have been reached until all nations see that it is nobler to conquer nature than to conquer each other.”² The romanticized words of the famed late 19th century Norwegian Arctic explorer Fridtjof Nansen capture the enduring promise and tragedy of the Arctic. On one hand, a potential common forum offering unprecedented opportunities for cooperation, on the other, a region to be overcome and exploited. Until roughly the period of Nansen’s expeditions across Greenland, the high north was marked as an impassable or even a fantastical region as depicted in Gerardo Mercator’s 1595 print of an imagined temperate polar sea.³ Previous centuries’ explorers pursued campaigns to conquer nature, seeking lucrative trade networks in Asia by charting often deadly courses to find the Northwest Passage or a corridor around the ice-flanked Northern Sea Route. Their activities forever connected exploration, science, commerce, and state strategy with the Earth’s poles. Sub-Arctic human conflicts and other security-related and competitive commercial activities also affected the Arctic dating from Europe’s medieval period, and most notably during the Cold War.⁴ These further shaped Western Arctic ideologies, imparting lasting perspectives on competition and threat perception. However, those taken with the Arctic’s stark beauty, unique ecosystems, and later advocacy for its indigenous peoples also continued to advance the idea that the Arctic might serve to enhance liberal institutions and stewardship. All of these ideals live on in the establishment of international systems of environmental governance and multi-

² Charles Emmerson, *The Future History of the Arctic* (New York: Public Affairs, 2010), 9, ProQuest Ebook Central.

³ Emmerson, *The Future History of the Arctic*, 6.

⁴ Bertelsen, “The International Political Systemic Context of Arctic Marine Resource Governance,” 6.

disciplinary, transnational dialogues. Nansen's statement thus continues to resonate within the 21st century's Arctic geopolitical environment, concepts of cooperation and self-interest, and attitudes towards the region's resource potential. Ironically, due to climate change, the long-sought connection between Asia and the West is occurring in the Arctic, but in terms not quite anticipated or imagined.

This thesis details China's rise as a self-professed "Near Arctic"⁵ state and analyzes the spectrum of geopolitical change its entrance into the far north's diplomatic systems engenders. In the process, this thesis contributes to existing international relations theories tailored to the Arctic, advances larger analysis on China's global rise, and offers policy direction for a rapidly changing Arctic region. China's modern connections with the West and with Eurasia come at a time when the Arctic has increasingly come under international focus due to climate change. Thus, beyond simply cataloguing China's advancing Arctic strategic agenda, the following three chapters intend to further several themes inherent to emerging inter-state dynamics in the Arctic. Foremost among these is a theory that exclusionary practice by states or international organizations (IO) towards emerging actors in regions experiencing rapid globalization results in unintended construction of peripheral influence systems, led by the excluded. This concept is summarized throughout this thesis as *exclusion-peripheralization*. China's pursuit of Arctic statehood serves as this thesis's primary guide to understanding exclusion-peripheralization, but the aim is to further a wider application to other global frontiers, including conceptual or scientific "regions."

⁵ People's Republic of China State Council Information Office, "China's Arctic Policy," January 2018, accessed February 26, 2020, http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2018/01/26/content_281476026660336.htm.

The exclusion-peripheralization causality is aided by sub-themes underlining the means by which extra-regional states like China use to establish roles in new influence regions. First, new regional actors may wield an often-symbiotic relationship between science and commerce rather than attempting to establish their own sovereign territorial holdings. In several contexts that will be explored, state engineering of international leadership outside traditional sovereign territorial boundaries and the means in which this is enacted has been alternately labeled as “flexible regional,”⁶ “science diplomacy,”⁷ “cognitive territory,”⁸ or “techno-politics.”⁹ Further transnational leadership comes in the form of participation in “epistemic communities,” wherein a diverse cast of multi-disciplinary experts or stakeholders, some serving as state policy interlocutors, referred to as “knowledge brokers” by Karen Litfin, routinely convene to discuss global challenges, and in the process establish and maintain new norms of international beliefs and behavior.¹⁰ While not entirely new concepts, as briefly discussed in Chapter 1’s description on the events leading to the formation of the 1959 Antarctic Treaty and Chapter 3’s analysis of Britain’s 19th century treaty port system, this thesis posits that

⁶ Timo Koivurova, “The Arctic Council: A Testing Ground for New International Environmental Governance,” *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 19, no. 1 (Fall-Winter 2012): 140-142, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1364726171?accountid=11752>.

⁷ Marc Lanteigne, “‘Have You Entered the Storehouses of the Snow?’ China as a Norm Entrepreneur in the Arctic,” *Polar Record* 53, no. 2 (March 2017): 121, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247416000759>.

⁸ Fa-ti Fan, “Victorian Naturalists in China: Science and Informal Empire,” *British Journal for the History of Science* 36, no. 128 (March, 2003): 25, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007087402004910>.

⁹ Trym Aleksander Eiterjord, “Arctic Technopolitics and China’s Reception of the Polar Code,” The Arctic Institute, May 26, 2020, <https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/arctic-technopolitics-china-reception-polar-code/>.

¹⁰ Karen T. Litfin, “Framing Science: Precautionary Discourse and the Ozone Treaties,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 24, no. 2 (July 1995): 253, <https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298950240020501>; Bertelsen, “The GCC-Russia-China LNG Triangle: The Role of Transnational Knowledge Networks and Epistemic Communities to Govern Complex Systems,” 490-491.

science or knowledge-based ‘territory’ may be supplanting traditional concepts of territorial-based legitimacy that have been foundational in international governance systems like the Arctic Council (AC). A wide array of other comparative studies in international political economy are relevant to globalization of the Arctic, as well as China’s specific means for achieving power. Historical analogies detailing the U.S.’s own use of science diplomacy in the Cold War, as undertaken by Bryan Lintott of Cambridge’s Scott Polar Research Institute,¹¹ or studies related to the establishment of science and commercial hegemonies, similar to Chapter 3’s cameo on British treaty ports, Margaret Blunden’s article “Geopolitics and the Northern Sea Route”,¹² or Jason Smith’s dissertation work on 19th century U.S. Pacific expansion, are worthy of additional study.¹³

Second, political anthropology plays a foundational, and at times strategic, role in the interaction between established and emerging Arctic states. Culture, history, and geographical symbolism serve as both context, and when skillfully exercised or joined with strategic imperatives, prove to be emotive methods for loosening otherwise insurmountable political obstacles between states. Finally, the Arctic demonstrates the human and physical processes by which a region rises in international prominence, and the consequences such promotion to a global theater holds for state, region, and world. In the last two decades, the forces of climate change, felt by the entire international community, have directly led to an Arctic pivot. In turn, previously external events now

¹¹ Bryan Lintott, “The Coldest Front: The Central Intelligence Agency & American Antarctic Policy & Operations (1947-59),” lecture presented at Johns Hopkins University, Washington D.C., February 25, 2020.

¹² Margaret Blunden, “Geopolitics and the Northern Sea Route,” *International Affairs* 88, no.1 (January 2012), <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2012.01060.x>.

¹³ Jason W. Smith, *To Master the Boundless Sea: the U.S. Navy, the Marine Environment, and the Cartography of Empire* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 209.

increasingly affect the Arctic, ranging from sub-regional conflicts or preparation for future war, social justice, transnational crime, food scarcity and other human security concerns, to pandemics. These now global experiences, contribute in innumerable ways to Arctic state and non-state interaction, and should be expected to continue to alter this newly internationalized space in the years to come.

Beyond theorization, one might wonder why else contemporary Arctic geopolitics are worthy of study at this time. After all, the Arctic is just one region in which new conflicts, strategic partnerships, and environmental concerns are rapidly developing. While the three reasons for Arctic study listed below are primarily tailored to a U.S. policy audience, each could quite easily be adapted to serve the interests of any state or Arctic stakeholder. Such universal motivations also include global climate change concerns, new areas for commerce, security, and international influence.

This thesis focuses on the political and human behavioral consequences of climate change in the Arctic, a small sample of its innumerable ramifications. This thesis is not designed to contribute significantly to the vast amount of existing work on climate science advocacy, and thus detailed discussion of climate change itself, while acknowledged as the principle catalyst driving Arctic geopolitical change, remains largely in a contextual background throughout. Climate change is arguably the most critical threat posed to global security in this century. Therefore, a short survey of the environmental forces driving Arctic geopolitics is necessary prior to beginning each chapter's analysis. According to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) 2019 Arctic Report Card, sea ice thickness measured at the end of 2019's summer season, tied 2016 and 2007 as the thinnest since analysis began in

1979. In August 2019, several long studied sea areas recorded 1 to 7°C increases in mean water temperatures for that month.¹⁴ Final calculations for 2020 are incomplete as of this writing; however, preliminary analysis by the National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) found the 2020 summer season second only to 2012 in having the shortest annual extent of sea ice (Figures 1 and 2).¹⁵ The Greenland ice sheet, seen in dramatic videos of crumbling ice edifices, is now annually losing 267 billion metric tons of ice, resulting in global sea water rise of approximately 0.7mm a year.¹⁶ Glacial and sea ice melt has also exposed previously inaccessible mineral and fossil fuel resources, driving prospective interest and investment in the Arctic by an array of international companies. Traditionally ice-covered areas, like the Northwest Passage and Northern Sea Route, that stood as grand obstacles to early explorers and served to establish international sea law and regional governance regimes, are becoming increasingly open to annual commercial shipping, resource exploitation, and tourist traffic.

¹⁴ “Arctic Report Card: Update for 2019,” NOAA, accessed March 30, 2020, <https://arctic.noaa.gov/Report-Card/Report-Card-2019>.

¹⁵ Michon Scott, “2020 Arctic Sea Ice Minimum Second Lowest on Record,” NOAA, September 21, 2020, <https://www.climate.gov/news-features/featured-images/2020-arctic-sea-ice-minimum-second-lowest-record>.

¹⁶ NOAA, “Arctic Report Card: Update for 2019.”

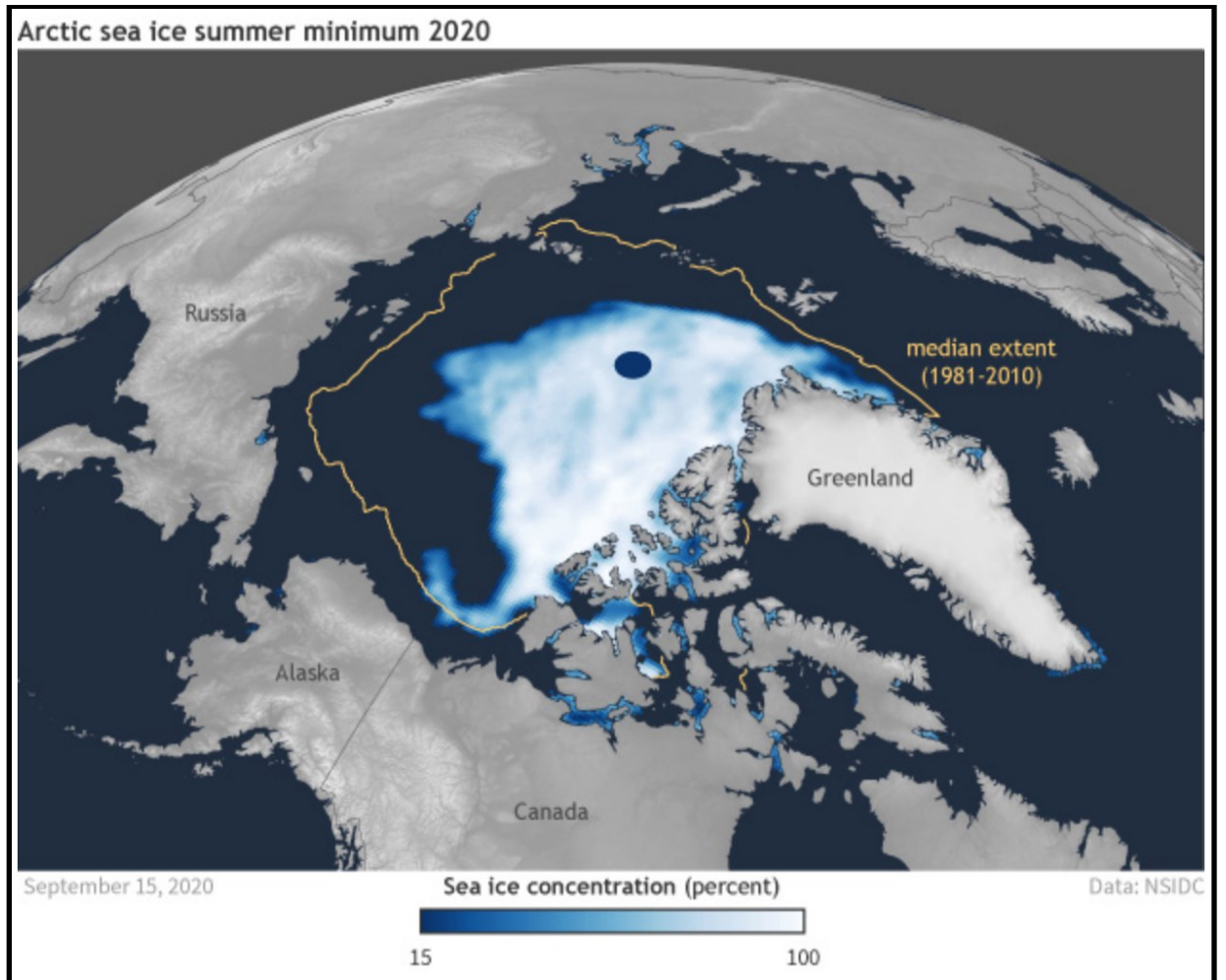


Figure 1. Preliminary analysis by NSIDC showing the annual extent of sea ice for 2020 as compared to the 1981-2010 median extent.¹⁷

¹⁷ Scott, “2020 Arctic Sea Ice Minimum Second Lowest on Record.”

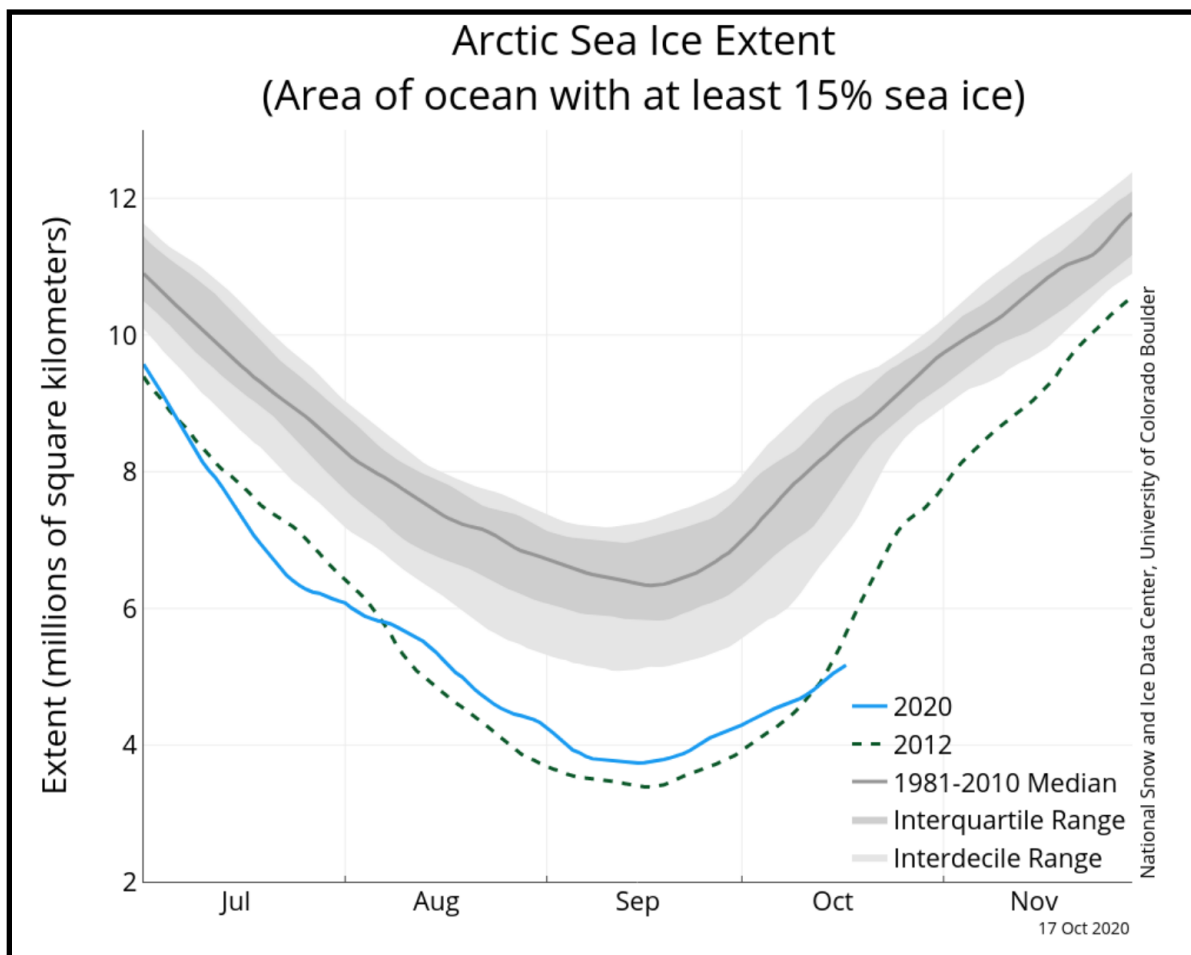


Figure 2. NSIDC graphic depiction of sea ice extent showing 2020's comparison to the record set during the 2012 summer season.¹⁸

Some predictions, echoed by the U.S. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in its 2019 Arctic Strategy, hold that shipping areas of the Northwest Passage, Northern Sea Route, and Transpolar Route may become nearly or entirely ice-free by 2040 (Figure 3).¹⁹ Should this occur, an analysis of shipping routes determined that

¹⁸ "Arctic Sea Ice News & Analysis," National Snow and Ice Data Center, Accessed October 20, 2020, <https://nsidc.org/arcticseaicenews/>.

¹⁹ Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, "Report to Congress: Department of Defense Arctic Strategy," U.S. Department of Defense, June 2019, <https://media.defense.gov/2019/Jun/06/2002141657/-1/-1/1/2019-DOD-ARCTIC-STRATEGY.PDF>; Chief of Naval Operations, "The United States Navy Arctic Roadmap for 2014 to 2030," U.S. Navy, February 2014, https://www.navy.mil/docs/USN_arctic_roadmap.pdf. **Note:** The U.S. Navy's June 2019 "Strategic Outlook for the Arctic," supersedes the 2014 paper, and while

several standard city-pairs might benefit from either shorter, or “equidistant” commercial transit lanes.²⁰ Opening of the first two routes will also increasingly stimulate ongoing international legal disputes over territorial water claims and freedom of navigation rights. Melting of the Transpolar Route might avoid some of these conflicts, but nonetheless initiate new environmental and commercial deliberations on the status and protection of the open Arctic Ocean. International anticipation of these nascent challenges is well underway, exemplified by evolving state policies, submission of seabed claims to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), and an outpouring of international law publishings on related matters.

This great Arctic maritime opening is often coupled with a widely publicized 2008 study by the U.S. Geological Survey, and follow up 2009 article in *Science*, that found offshore areas of the Arctic Circle may account for 30% of the world’s undiscovered natural gas (1,669 trillion cubic feet) and 13% of its undiscovered oil (90 billion barrels).²¹ The implication of the opening of these vital resources and emerging commercial routes is clear, with history offering numerous examples of the spectrum of human activity and interaction that follows energy and mercantile interests. Extracting these resources also pose numerous challenges, some of which have yet to be overcome. However, commercial and sustainable development dialogues on new resource exploitive

acknowledging the preceding policy’s science-based analysis on ocean warming trends, opts not to offer a prediction on yearly ice coverage.

²⁰ John L. Conway III, “Search and Rescue in the High North: an Air Force Mission?” *Air & Space Power Journal* 27, no. 6 (November 2013): 4, 21.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=f5h&AN=91985859&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

²¹ U.S. Geological Survey, “USGS Fact Sheet: Circum-Arctic Resource Appraisal: Estimates of Undiscovered Oil and Gas North of the Arctic Circle,” 2008, <https://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2008/3049/fs2008-3049.pdf>; Ronald O’Rourke, et al., “Changes in the Arctic: Background and Issues for Congress,” *Congressional Research Service*, August 23, 2019, 65,

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=tsh&AN=138802883&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

innovations and technology are also occurring around the Arctic, and themselves serve as significant transnational forums. Thus, the effects of climate change, while strikingly present in the Arctic, are also felt by the international community as both a threat to their own shores, a potential arena for exploitation, and a stimulus for evolving governance solutions. Nansen’s possibilities for “conquering nature,” regrettably made easier by climate change, have become a global consideration.

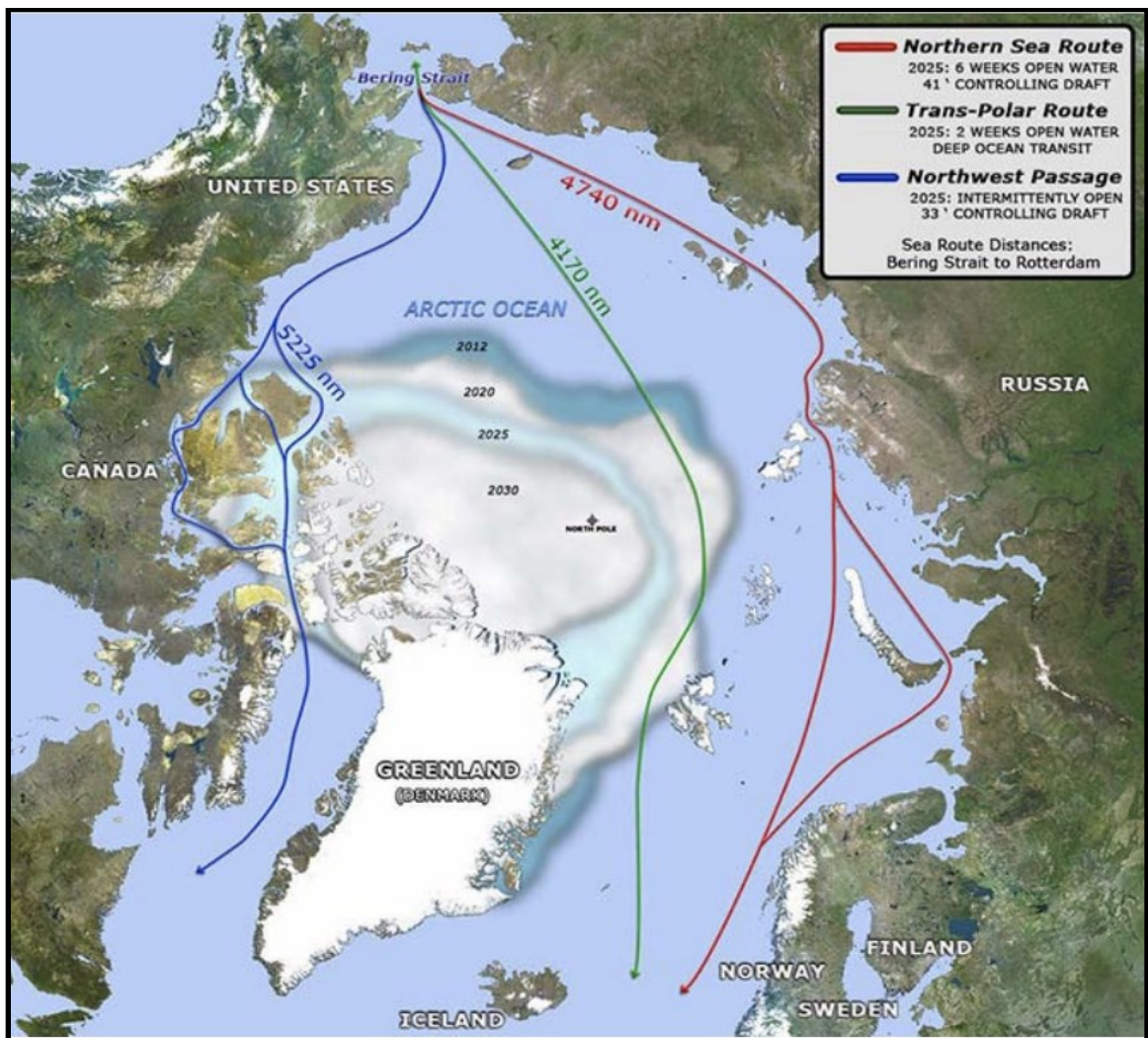


Figure 3. Depiction of Arctic Sea Routes, their total lengths between the Bering Strait and Rotterdam, Germany, and anticipated number of ice-free water by 2025.²²

²² National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), *Publication 183: Sailing Directions (Enroute) North Coast of Russia, 12th Edition* (Springfield, VA: NGA, 2017), 5, file:///Users/danielfriedman/Downloads/Pub183bk.pdf.

Much has been written in international affairs and defense strategy circles about 21st century great power dynamics. As stated above, the sub-Arctic actions of established and evolving international hegemony has a long history, but now routinely affect the Arctic. Great power competition in the region is included in the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy's 2019 Arctic Strategy, cited as a developing threat to regional and world orders. It proclaims, "the Arctic is a potential avenue for expanded great power competition and aggression spanning between two key regions of ongoing competition identified in the NDS [National Defense Strategy]— the Indo-Pacific and Europe — and the U.S. homeland."²³ Scholarly debate on Arctic great power competition is a bit more nuanced as will be discussed in Chapter 1; however, it is safe to say there has been a dramatic increase in globally-relevant Arctic activities by China, Russia, NATO, and a host of non-Arctic littoral states in the last two decades. New strategic-level partnerships between Russia and China, the establishment of transnational commerce centered on Arctic energy resources, and re-vitalization and expansion of former Cold War military bases all contribute to a region deserving much greater scrutiny by U.S. and international policymakers.

From a U.S. perspective, influence and operational capability imbalances in the far north should continue to pose a concern. Any developing region, including non-territorial, conceptual, or scientific regions, provide avenues for states to establish or maintain 'hard' and 'soft' power. States like the U.S. that historically expect to influence global outcomes would be wise to recognize the modern Arctic exemplifies such a space. Since the early 2000s, China has heavily invested in the polar sciences, both as a

²³ Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, "Report to Congress: Department of Defense Arctic Strategy," 1-3, 7.

mitigating measure to predict climate change's effects on its own coasts and to preemptively seize advantage in what it considers emerging strategic venues.²⁴ This investment is now paying off, not simply in lucrative infrastructure, energy, mineral, shipping, and ship building partnerships across the Arctic, but most importantly in its growing international acceptance as an Arctic power. This thesis argues that international acceptance is the first step in China's achievement of influence in the region's governance systems. This is occurring just as U.S. international image and influence in the sciences, climate-change dialogue, economy, racial justice, and overall diplomatic engagement has measurably diminished, especially among close allies and other Western proponents of the established liberal order.²⁵ Thus, while China remains this thesis's object of study, it would behoove the U.S. policy-minded reader to keep in mind the four tenets of the U.S.'s traditional international position as outlined in the August 2020 Congressional Research Service's *U.S. Role in the World: Background and Issues for Congress*: "1) global leadership, 2) defense and promotion of the liberal international order, 3) defense and promotion of freedom, democracy, and human rights 4) prevention of the emergence of regional hegemons in Eurasia."²⁶ This is not to say China's own dubious record on human rights, scientific veracity, and resource exploitive practices are to be disregarded. Each of these certainly play into residual mistrust on its overall Arctic intentions, and have served as the principle obstacles China has had to surmount in

²⁴ Julie Babin and Frederic Lasserre, "Asian States at the Arctic Council: Perceptions in Western States," *Polar Geography* 42, no. 3 (February 2019): 145, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1088937X.2019.1578290>.

²⁵ Richard Wike, Janell Fetterolf, and Mara Mordecai, "U.S. Image Plummets Internationally as Most Say Country Has Handled Coronavirus Badly," Pew Research Center, September 15, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/09/15/us-image-plummets-internationally-as-most-say-country-has-handled-coronavirus-badly/>.

²⁶ Ronald O'Rourke and Michael Moodie, "R44891: U.S. Role in the World: Background and Issues for Congress," *Congressional Research Service*, August 26, 2020, 1, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R44891.pdf>.

gaining its current and desired levels of Arctic influence. However, if the U.S. intends to maintain a global leadership role, contemporary Arctic geopolitics offer one of the more promising theaters for exertion of its historic principles. Disregarding consistent engagement with China and established Arctic states over developing systems of regional governance will likely come with a price. This thesis argues that the real “race to the Arctic,” a more sensational moniker occasionally applied by the media, is in actuality a race to keep pace with the region’s dynamic governance systems and “transnational knowledge networks.”²⁷

This thesis takes a qualitative, case study approach to answering how China is peripherally operating and constructing its role as an Arctic power. Organized into three chapters, these case studies cover contemporary interactions as well as two historical examples of non-territorial sovereignty based governance systems: the geopolitics surrounding the creation of the 1959 Antarctic Treaty and the 19th century British treaty port system along China’s own coast. Chapter 1 provides a wide-angle perspective and background on contemporary Arctic geopolitics vis-à-vis China’s regional rise. It begins with a short primer on the AC and established regional governance. Then, China’s 2018 Arctic Policy is thoroughly dissected, with an examination of the spectrum of existing analytical interpretations, including studies on Chinese organizational and greater strategic policy motivations. In the process, China’s concept of the Arctic’s global relevancy and governance —tied to science in its Arctic Policy— are explored along with its connection to the One Belt One Road Initiative (BRI). The chapter continues with a presentation of how China’s norm-engineering approach to overcoming regional

²⁷ Bertelsen, “The International Political Systemic Context of Arctic Marine Resource Governance,” 4.

exclusion, through a variety of commercial and science based interactions with Arctic states, will impact established governance. The evolution of the AC's ability to maintain and further epistemic structures resident within elements of its working groups is critiqued in order to compare regional influence systems.²⁸ Chapter 1's case study of the Antarctic Treaty, a science-based international governance regime, is examined again in the conclusion's policy recommendations section.

Chapter 2 uses a political anthropological approach in its case study of Greenland's evolving independence movement vis-à-vis nascent Chinese engagement and existing relationships between Greenland's predominately Inuit population, their prior colonizer Denmark, and a strategically-minded U.S. In order to illustrate these dynamics, Greenland's independence narratives are compared to the historical activities and modern policies of the U.S., Denmark, China, and to a lesser extent other IOs. These include Greenland's perspectives on security and economic relationships, with the U.S. and Denmark providing the traditional nexus to NATO. Greenland's interactions with the EU and the Western Nordic Council offer more recent interactions that may portend future multilateral alignments. Greenland also offers a study on China's journey into Arctic geopolitics as it tenuously negotiates the U.S. and Denmark's response to perceived strategic competition with its own motivations for commercial and global influence. The chapter considers these factors with the intention of predicting which entities might occupy an advantaged position in Greenland following its eventual independence. In the process, the reader gains further appreciation of the

²⁸ Jennifer Spence, "Is a Melting Arctic Making the Arctic Council Too Cool? Exploring the Limits to the Effectiveness of a Boundary Organization," *Review of Policy Research* 34, No. 6 (September 2017): 795, 798, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ropr.12257>; Bertelsen, "The International Political Systemic Context of Arctic Marine Resource Governance," 13.

internationalization of once regional issues regarding Greenland's independence, U.S. policy, and continued study on the unintended effects of exclusionary state practices.

The final chapter describes the progressing relationship between China and Russia over Northern Sea Route development. It argues that it is here, at the top of the Eurasian continent, where China has most successfully achieved its desired Arctic end state, again aided by forces of exclusivity. It includes a brief study on the 19th century British system of 'empire' wherein global influence and power was not purely derived from territorial holdings, but rather highly integrated commercial and knowledge-based competencies. Chapter 3 returns to several elements discussed in the previous chapters including the creation and implementation of diverse knowledge-based forums: dedicated to both scientific and commercial pursuits, the multiple internal and external sources involved in influencing China's Arctic designs, and larger concepts of global governance. Each case study is finally distilled into larger exclusion-peripheralization theory analysis and specific policy recommendations in the conclusion.

Chapter 1: China, a Near-Arctic State?

Introduction

In January 2018, China unveiled its long-awaited Arctic Policy paper, proclaiming itself a “Near Arctic State.”²⁹ This new identity, coming five years after its admittance into the AC and in a decade that saw an international Arctic refocus, offers much strategic insight into China’s polar ambitions. This chapter examines China’s actions to support its Arctic statehood claim vis-à-vis the influence of the AC, the established international forum for Arctic regional policy development and advocacy. Following a primer on the AC and China’s 2018 Arctic Policy paper, we will examine how the AC’s viability might be altered in the future by China’s expressed goal to be legitimized as an international asset to polar “wisdom” and by the AC’s remaining structural exclusion of China.³⁰ As an official AC Observer, China lacks voting power within the body. However, this influence limiter has not prevented China from establishing bilateral agreements with individual AC states; participating in, as well as leading, multi-state and multi-disciplinary polar epistemic communities; and advancing peripheral scientific research and natural resource exploitation activities. China’s spectrum of Arctic engagement alludes to complex internal motivations whereby its policy of “going out” is simultaneously driven by state owned enterprises (SOE), academic and scientific communities, provincial interests, and larger strategic goals including global governance schemes and advancement of the BRI.³¹ Each of these

²⁹ People’s Republic of China State Council Information Office, “China’s Arctic Policy.”

³⁰ People’s Republic of China State Council Information Office, “China’s Arctic Policy.”

³¹ Martin Kossa, “China’s Arctic Engagement: Domestic Actors and Foreign Policy,” *Global Change, Peace & Security* 32, no. 1 (July 2019): 20-21, DOI: 10.1080/14781158.2019.1648406.

elements cycle through its inner policy making organs, as will soon be discussed in analysis of the 2018 Arctic Policy.

China's norm-creation in the Arctic follows constructivist international relations (IR) theory models exhibited by emerging powers. Its exclusion from the AC also reflects issues faced in establishing and maintaining the 1959 Antarctic Treaty, a science-based governance regime that offers an alternative to traditional territorial sovereignty-based hierarchical constructs of most IOs. Though the Antarctic Treaty's physical and geopolitical environment differs from that of the Arctic, it represents one possible solution for stronger international governance, particularly over unclaimed or disputed resource areas of the Arctic Ocean. In the process of this analysis, this paper also investigates how norm creation supported by knowledge accumulation, rather than traditional territorial capital, may portend a growing evolution in what constitutes legitimacy within IOs.

Environmental Change Meets Geopolitics: A Primer on the Arctic Council and China's Developing Role as a "Near Arctic State"

The AC was founded in 1996 as a "high level forum" for "promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States...Arctic indigenous communities, and other Arctic inhabitants on...issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic."³² In its current structure, the AC is comprised of eight Member States recognized by their possession of sovereign territories above or bordering the Arctic Circle. These states include the U.S., Canada, Denmark (Greenland), Iceland,

³² Arctic Council, "Joint Communiqué of the Governments of the Arctic Countries on the Establishment of the Arctic Council (Ottawa Declaration)," September 19, 1996, https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/bitstream/handle/11374/85/EDOCS-1752-v2-ACMMCA00_Ottawa_1996_Founding_Declaration.PDF?sequence=5&isAllowed=y.

Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Russia. Each state enjoys a rotational Chairmanship lasting two years. Members also provide Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) which oversee each of the AC's working groups, the forum's main policy development organs and principle epistemic arenas.³³ The AC's Permanent Participants are comprised of indigenous groups from across the Arctic led by the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat. Permanent Participant representatives interact throughout each of the AC's strata, giving them a unique ability to influence decisions throughout the organization.³⁴ Beginning in 1998, "extra-territorial"³⁵ Observer states and non-government organizations were permitted to participate, but not vote or chair, the AC's six working groups. The latter remain principally focused on environmental issues and sustainability, with five of the six exclusively devoted to related disciplines. While retaining the organization's central environmentalist and cooperative tenets, the Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) working group has an additional focus on safety measures including search and rescue (SAR) policy.

Politically recognized territory, or in the case of indigenous groups, traditional homelands, remain the organization's principle discriminator for its established hierarchy. The controversial 2008 Ilulissat Declaration, by the self-proclaimed Arctic-5,³⁶

³³ Bertelsen and Ping Su, "Knowledge-Based Institutions in Sino-Arctic Engagement: Lessons for the Belt and Road Initiative," in *Rethinking the Silk Road: China's Belt and Road Initiative and Emerging Eurasian Relations*, ed. Maximilian Mayer, (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 153.

³⁴ Spence, "Is a Melting Arctic Making the Arctic Council Too Cool?" 798.

³⁵ Klaus Dodds, "The Ilulissat Declaration (2008): The Arctic States, "Law of the Sea," and Arctic Ocean," *SAIS Review of International Affairs XXXIII*, no. 2 (Summer-Fall 2013): 52, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/sais.2013.0018>; "Observers," Arctic Council, accessed March 31, 2020, <https://arctic-council.org/en/about/observers/>.

³⁶ Andreas Kuersten, "Briefing Note: The Arctic Five Versus the Arctic Council," *Arctic Yearbook 2016*, accessed April 1, 2020, https://arcticyearbook.com/images/yearbook/2016/Briefing_Notes/9.Kuersten.pdf. **Note:** The Arctic-5, or the five nations with lands inside the Arctic Circle, is a conceptual union of

sought to reinforce this territorial-based stratum and underline the preeminence of international law after the infamous 2007 Russian flag planting on the seafloor of the North Pole. However, the Declaration is also credited with unintentionally creating geopolitical pressure to include additional Observer states and NGOs in AC deliberations, exemplifying the exclusion-peripheralization causality.³⁷ In 2013, the AC gave Observer status to China, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, India, and Italy, signaling an opening for states with few historical ties, and significantly, non-Western interests in the Arctic.³⁸ As will be discussed shortly, while Observer status has been welcomed by these new states, the exclusionary structure of the AC as well as its environmental focus remains, leading to the development of peripheral forums and knowledge networks with more diverse followings.

Of the AC's new Observers, China has been the most active in establishing its presence in the AC's working groups, furthering its agenda to become a recognized global leader in Arctic affairs.³⁹ China's 2018 Arctic Policy as well as associated official and scholarly rhetoric follow most global reactions to the climate crisis and associated geopolitical dynamics, namely that sea level rise and other associated environmental impacts will be equally felt by all states, and thus all states have rights and obligations to attempt to mitigate its effects. For the Arctic, this global governance assertion both

interests, rather than a defined body like the AC. While its occasional meetings have incited frustration from other excluded AC states and entities, it lacks a formal administration or charter like the AC.

³⁷ Dodds, "The Ilulissat Declaration (2008)," 52; Lanteigne, "Have You Entered the Storehouses of the Snow?" 124.

³⁸ Steven Lee Meyers, "Arctic Council Adds 6 Nations as Observer States, Including China," *New York Times*, May 16, 2013, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/16/world/europe/arctic-council-adds-six-members-including-china.html>.

³⁹ Babin and Lasserre, "Asian States at the Arctic Council: Perceptions in Western States," 146-147; Su Ping and Marc Lanteigne, "China's Developing Arctic Policies: Myths and Misconceptions," *Journal of China and International Relations* 3, no. 1 (2015): 12-13, ProQuest Central.

substantiates and challenges what has traditionally been a regional, territorial-based governance and advocacy regime represented by the AC.

While much in China's Arctic Policy can be left to interpretation, several strategic themes are readily apparent. First, while noting a lack of comprehensive governance for the region, China acknowledges the preeminence of existing international laws and protections afforded Arctic territories, specifically the UN, UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1925 Spitsbergen (Svalbard) Treaty, and individual Arctic states' sovereignty rights. However, in the open Arctic Ocean, encompassing 'the Area' in standard UNCLOS terminology, China is quick to list legal open ocean activities including scientific research, navigation, overflight, fishing, submarine cable and pipeline laying, exploration and exploitation.⁴⁰ Scientific research, mentioned 57 times in the paper, is noted as a primary means of cooperating with the international community. Scientific exploration has long been an avenue for exerting strategic and commercial influence in uncharted territories, a relationship Jason Smith frames in his description of the U.S.'s own 19th century Pacific hydrographic expeditions as "the empirical was inextricably imperial."⁴¹ As will be discussed later, while China is not seeking imperial claims to Arctic territory and appears to be embracing a system of egalitarian multinational scientific interaction in the region, it is still exploring ways to leverage scientific and geopolitical relationships to gain strategic advantage in a region where it has not traditionally held influence.

⁴⁰ People's Republic of China State Council Information Office, "China's Arctic Policy."

⁴¹ Smith, *To Master the Boundless Sea*, 2.

Second, China attempts to establish historical geo-relevancy, designed after the Western model, tracing Chinese Arctic equities back to the 1925 Spitsbergen Treaty. The paper expounds on China's long commitment to Arctic science and exploration, noting its 14 years of research at the Yellow River Station in Ny Alesund, Spitsbergen Archipelago, Norway and eight scientific explorations to the Arctic Ocean as of 2017. As will be further discussed, these scientific enterprises represent the complexities of Chinese polar motivations, serving as vital links to respected international knowledge networks, conduits to Chinese Arctic policy development, and means for advancement of larger global initiatives like the BRI.

Finally, China bridges its commitment as a "responsible major country" and active participant in global scientific advocacy to Arctic cooperative engagement with an introduction of the "Polar Silk Road" component of China's greater BRI initiative. In so doing, it underlines China's concept of global governance over the Arctic space. The white paper concludes, "China...is ready to cooperate with all relevant parties to seize the historic opportunity in the development of the Arctic, to address the challenges brought by the changes in the region, jointly understand, protect, develop and participate in the governance of the Arctic, and advance Arctic-related cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative, so as to build a community with a shared future for mankind and contribute to peace, stability and sustainable development in the Arctic."⁴² Some scholars and journalists regard this final pronouncement with suspicion, claiming the north's opening for resource exploitation as the beginning of a 21st century "Great Game."⁴³

⁴² People's Republic of China State Council Information Office, "China's Arctic Policy."

⁴³ Keith Johnson, "Searching for Leads in the Opening Arctic," *Foreign Policy*, September 14, 2015, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/09/14/searching-for-leads-in-the-opening-arctic/>; Meyers, "Arctic Council Adds 6 Nations as Observer States, Including China."

Others see more global governance intentions, related to a changing physical and geopolitical environment.

Scholarly interpretations of China's Arctic ambitions both preceding and following its Arctic Policy paper can be best categorized via established IR theories. Most of these writings anchor on the AC's continuing influence amidst both changing physical and geopolitical environments. Realists caution of increased Chinese influence on the AC and its peripheries, arguing the current AC structure may not go far enough in protecting the Arctic from exploitation from a proven revisionist power. Citing Mearsheimer, some Realists go as far as to encourage preventing Chinese or other extra-territorial states from achieving any purchase in the region. Liberals meanwhile welcome China to cooperative Arctic institutions and warn that excluding any state or non-state interests will ultimately lead to the AC's fragmentation and less monitored peripheral activities. With the recent exceptions of U.S. and Danish actions towards Chinese development projects discussed in Chapter 2 and aforementioned AC exclusions, Liberal policies appear to dominate most state and non-state policies toward China's entrance into the region's various diplomatic forums.⁴⁴ China's desire to be recognized as a "Near Arctic" state and a "responsible major country" also meets the social norm-building criteria of Constructivists, who view China's activities in terms of established social entrepreneurship models. How precisely China is pursuing Arctic norm creation and its potential effect on the AC's influence remains understudied. However, its significant investment in polar science, related strategic communications, and alliance building on

⁴⁴ Bertelsen, "The International Political Systemic Context of Arctic Marine Resource Governance," 9.

the AC's borders evokes historic global power strategies when approaching uncharted geopolitical regions.

Perhaps the most enlightening perspective related to China's 2018 Arctic policy comes from those studying the inner workings of the Chinese organizations tasked with producing the paper itself. Martin Kossa documents the multiple interest groups assembled for the task in describing China's overall organizational model as both an example of "fragmented authoritarianism," and a "consultive authoritarian regime," where official decisions are mandated by the Chinese Communist Party, but the policy itself is derived below the Politburo level by a diverse cast of "sub-state actors."⁴⁵ Kossa describes each step in the 2018 policy's creation and influence process. The first step took place in 2011 when the State Council initiated an Arctic committee composed of 20 government ministries, led by the China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). At its beginning, this was purely a government led process; however, consultation with SOEs, provincial government representatives, and technical experts took place after the committee disseminated its draft to this sub-strata.⁴⁶ These sub-consultants included representatives of the northeast provinces of Jilin and Liaoning, which stand the most to gain from opening of Arctic commerce; state-owned oil, gas, and shipping companies; a growing cast of Arctic research institutes; and to a lesser extent the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLA(N)). Each of these entities gained exposure to the Arctic through numerous international engagement avenues, which diffuse global perspectives, or

⁴⁵ Kossa, "China's Arctic Engagement: Domestic Actors and Foreign Policy," 20-21.

⁴⁶ Kossa, "China's Arctic Engagement: Domestic Actors and Foreign Policy," 35.

“transnational knowledge” into what is otherwise an internal policymaking structure.⁴⁷

Thus, China’s Arctic white paper, connected to its larger “going out” policy encapsulated in the BRI, is motivated by a vast host of actors, many of which gain their perspectives from outside any more insulated state entity.

China as an Arctic “Norm Entrepreneur”: A Challenge to Established International Governance Regimes?

The AC’s organizational structure and influence hierarchy is no different than most traditional IOs presiding over a specific regional space. Parties stake their authority within the IO on sovereign territorial holdings, historic precedences, established international hierarchy norms, or all three. “Norm entrepreneurship,” or the process of building upon or introducing new global ideologies, requires concerted “actioning” by states or non-states.⁴⁸ This effort is approached both administratively and through strategic communications branding. The former is often pursued by acquiring leadership positions within specific IO working groups that most closely align to the party’s end state.⁴⁹ In China’s case within the AC, its polar activities following admittance seem to demonstrate the expected behavior of any developed state previously isolated from a region of influence, with appointment of new ambassadors, increased participation in working groups, establishment of bilateral agreements with regional states, growth of

⁴⁷ Kossa, “China’s Arctic Engagement: Domestic Actors and Foreign Policy,” 24-26; Bertelsen, “The GCC-Russia-China LNG Triangle: The Role of Transnational Knowledge Networks and Epistemic Communities to Govern Complex Systems,” 484.

⁴⁸ Klaus Dodds and Mark Nuttall, *The Scramble for the Poles: The Geopolitics of the Arctic and Antarctic* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2015), 27, accessed February 19, 2020.
<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/jhu/reader.action?docID=4187202>.

⁴⁹ Jack Corbett, Yi-chong Xu, and Patrick Weller, “Norm Entrepreneurship and Diffusion ‘From Below,’” in *International Organisations: How the Competent Performance of Vulnerability Generates Benefits for Small States*, *Review of International Studies* 45, no. 4 (March 2019): 651,
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0260210519000068>.

research publications, and general public outreach.⁵⁰ However, in terms of international hierarchy, some scholars still describe China as a “frustrated great power,” well positioned in all the required global institutions, including those focused on the poles and outer space, yet lacking the respect afforded more established powers.⁵¹ As a result of this disparity, China appears to be pursuing Arctic recognition from both administrative and science-forward angles to gain this coveted level of elite legitimacy.⁵² Its emphasis on calling itself a “responsible major country” in its Arctic Policy’s concluding paragraph appears to be a not-so-subtle attempt to reconcile frustration caused by its exclusion.

Since 2014, China has remained most active in the AC’s Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP), Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), and Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) working groups.⁵³ While China’s underlying motivations for Arctic involvement may be exploitive and strategic in nature, its activities within the AC’s working groups appear to non-aggressive and in keeping with the AC’s charter. The volume of published Chinese academic Arctic research nearly doubled between 2005 and 2015, with some noticeable change in primary subject material from the natural sciences to more exploitive topics like shipping and resource extraction since 2008.⁵⁴ Despite this moderate internal academic evolution, Chinese representatives sent to staff working groups typically have oceanography or

⁵⁰ Dodds and Nuttall, *The Scramble for the Poles*, 104, 142.

⁵¹ Shogo Suzuki, “Seeking ‘Legitimate’ Great Power Status in Post-Cold War International Society: China’s and Japan’s Participation in UNPKO,” *International Relations* 22, no. 1 (2008): 45, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0047117807087242>.

⁵² Suzuki, “Seeking ‘Legitimate’ Great Power Status,” 46; Anne-Marie Brady, “The Rise of a New Polar Power,” in *China as a Polar Great Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 5-6, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316832004.002>.

⁵³ Babin and Lasserre, “Asian States at the Arctic Council,” 152.

⁵⁴ Babin and Lasserre, “Asian States at the Arctic Council,” 146-147.

meteorological backgrounds, rather than commercial experience.⁵⁵ These envoys are sourced via the MFA, which in conjunction with its Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and Chinese Arctic and Antarctic Administration represent the principle intra-state policy interlocutors with the AC and other regional forums.⁵⁶ As a result of this government connection, statements made by Chinese Arctic envoys, primarily in peripheral forums like the Arctic Circle Assembly, often represent the most current state policy.⁵⁷ Currently, China budgets an estimated \$75 million to polar research and expeditions with an increasing number of state research and academic institutions devoted to polar studies.⁵⁸ China's research interests and AC participation thus far appear to be primarily designed to instill a new international perception that it has pragmatic answers to many of the far north's key environmental and resource challenges.⁵⁹

However, might China's intentions also allude to a greater shift in norm-creation within 21st century international institutions? While Lanteigne posits that norm creation in traditional territorial-based regimes can be quite difficult, other scholars like Mia Bennet, argue future influence in the region will be less about territorial holdings and more about which state or entities influence the creation of lasting regulations on environmental, human security, and resource exploitation.⁶⁰ Both Oran Young and Timo

⁵⁵ Babin and Lasserre, "Asian States at the Arctic Council," 153.

⁵⁶ Kossa, "China's Arctic Engagement: Domestic Actors and Foreign Policy," 27.

⁵⁷ Bertelsen and Su, "Knowledge-Based Institutions in Sino-Arctic Engagement: Lessons for the Belt and Road Initiative," 155.

⁵⁸ Ping and Lanteigne, "China's Developing Arctic Policies: Myths and Misconceptions," 12, 15-16; Babin and Lasserre, "Asian States at the Arctic Council," 153.

⁵⁹ Lanteigne, "Have You Entered the Storehouses of the Snow?" 121.

⁶⁰ Lanteigne, "Have You Entered the Storehouses of the Snow?" 117; Mia Bennett, "At the Arctic Circle Forum, China Shows Arctic Geopolitics are above Mike Pompeo's Pay Grade," Eye on the Arctic (blog), May 13, 2019, <https://www.rcinet.ca/eye-on-the-arctic/2019/05/13/china-arctic-geopolitics-environment-arctic-circle-forum-conference/>.

Koivurova recognize this greater international movement and resultant requirement for future AC restructuring, with the latter arguing “flexible regional” systems with close ties to science like the AC may serve as the best model for modern international governance systems.⁶¹ As will be described in the following section, successful flexibility likely depends on greater inclusion of non-governmental entities within the AC’s ranks.

Branding is yet another aspect of Chinese norm entrepreneurship. While perhaps a less sophisticated feature of its approach, China’s self-proclaimed “Near Arctic” statehood nonetheless poses a significant provocation to established, largely Western, concepts of Arctic claim, paving a potential ideological path towards international acceptance of China as a regional power player. Notably, the brand itself is credited to Zhang Xia, Division of Polar Strategic Studies at the Polar Research Institute of China, again demonstrating the internal influence of polar research institutions as one of the main sources of direction for Chinese Arctic policy.⁶² Western, non-Arctic states have manufactured similar tag lines while inciting far less concern, including the U.K.’s “Arctic’s Nearest Neighbor” moniker used in its own 2013 Arctic White Paper.⁶³ As in its working group and research presence, the Chinese have also used derivatives of the “Near Arctic” statehood brand to align with established Arctic philosophies including protection of indigenous peoples. This included a celebration of its “Near Arctic Peoples” at the 2019 Shanghai-based Arctic Circle forum, which was met with suspicion over its seemingly heavy-handed use of cultural stewardship mores to influence the international

⁶¹ Koivurova, “The Arctic Council: A Testing Ground for New International Environmental Governance,” 140-142; Oran R. Young, “Is It Time for a Reset in Arctic Governance?” *Sustainability* 11, no. 16 (August 2019): 8-9, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11164497>.

⁶² Kossa, “China’s Arctic Engagement: Domestic Actors and Foreign Policy,” 25.

⁶³ Ping and Lanteigne, “China’s Developing Arctic Policies: Myths and Misconceptions,” 15-16.

community and particularly AC states.⁶⁴ For the time being, perhaps China's proclamations will largely reside within internal research and government circles, which routinely use the phrases "Near-Arctic State" and "legitimate stakeholder in the Arctic" when defining or defending China's status.⁶⁵ However, the international community is warming to the concept of peripheral Chinese expertise and dialogue, and certainly its Arctic commercial promise.

Arctic Peripheral Organizations, Stimulating the Arctic Council's Fragmentation or Evolution?

A special 2013 issue of *Global Environmental Politics*, edited by Fariborz Zelli and Harro van Asselt, comments on the inherent fragmentation exhibited by environmentally focused IOs. Contributing authors Thijs Van de Graaf, Sylvia I. Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen, and Jeffrey McGee use the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as an example, arguing the work of such IOs is typically distributed down to smaller NGOs, owing to domestic pressures and the "transactional costs" incurred by parties in creating and maintaining the larger bodies. However, the authors conclude that despite individual issue level fragmentation, the parent organization typically retains overall international legitimacy.⁶⁶ One enduring example within the AC's own influence region is the International Arctic Science

⁶⁴ Bennett, "At the Arctic Circle Forum."

⁶⁵ Kai Sun, "Beyond the Dragon and the Panda: Understanding China's Engagement in the Arctic," *Asia Policy* 18 (July 2014): 47-48, accessed February 22, 2020, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=4d3e3519-b7de-485c-ac9f-76dba67486db%40pdc-v-sessmgr06>.

⁶⁶ Thijs Van de Graaf, "Fragmentation in Global Energy Governance: Explaining the Creation of IRENA," and Sylvia I. Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen and Jeffrey McGee, "Legitimacy in an Era of Fragmentation: The Case of Global Climate Governance," in *The Institutional Fragmentation of Global Environmental Governance: Causes, Consequences, and Responses*, Fariborz Zelli and Harro van Asselt, eds., *Global Environmental Politics* 13, no. 3 (2013): 16, 74, <http://www.mitpressjournals.org/loi/glep>.

Committee (IASC), which joins scientists from both Arctic and non-Arctic states' leading national scientific organizations. IASC, to which China is also a party, has enjoyed AC Observer status since 1998 and regularly contributes to its working groups.⁶⁷ In this section, we will further examine sources of fragmentation along the AC's borders, supported by Chinese influence. Evaluating the health of the AC in the years following China's entrance will be done in two ways: analyzing the growth of peripheral organizations and projects to which China is either party or associate and determining how the AC itself is evolving to incorporate further international expertise into its own structure.

Study on the growth of alternative forums to the AC began in earnest following the 2008 Ilulissat Declaration, a product of the exclusionary Arctic-5 diplomatic construct. Scholars caution such exclusion naturally leads to the development of outside structures and bilateral opportunities, facilitating individual states and non-state entities' ability to take part in Arctic development while lessening the AC's own influence.⁶⁸ These extra-AC groups are primarily focused on commercial versus environmental issues, potentially representing a shift in overall global priority from a narrative of environmental and cultural stewardship, to one primarily of exploitation with more superficial environmental premises. Several immediate responses to the 2008 Ilulissat

⁶⁷ "IASC History," International Arctic Science Committee, accessed April 29, 2020, <https://iasc.info/iasc/history>; "Interview with Arctic Council Observer: International Arctic Science Committee," Arctic Council, March 11, 2020, <https://arctic-council.org/en/news/interview-with-arctic-council-observer-international-arctic-science-committee/>.

⁶⁸ Dodds, "The Ilulissat Declaration (2008)," 52; Young, "Is It Time for a Reset in Arctic Governance?" 7; Mathieu Landriault, Andrew Chater, Elana Wilson Rowe, and P. Whitney Lackenbauer, *Governing Complexity in the Arctic Region* (Milton: Routledge, 2019), 3, accessed February 17, 2020, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/jhu/reader.action?docID=5967819>.

Declaration were Iceland's increased bilateral cooperation with Chinese shipping companies and 2013 establishment of the Arctic Circle Forum, Sweden's "Common Concern for the Arctic" conference held in Ilulissat four months after the Declaration, and Finland's advocacy for including the European Union (EU) as an AC Observer.⁶⁹ As of this writing, the EU remains excluded from official Observer membership, despite repeated application, but can send envoys to view AC proceedings.⁷⁰

Bilateral agreements and other natural resource-focused projects between China and individual AC states, although existing prior, increased following the 2008 Ilulissat Declaration (Table 1). China advanced land and energy deals with Finland, Denmark, Norway, and Russia including the joint Power of Siberia pipelines and Yamal LNG.⁷¹ The Yamal LNG and Northern Sea Route development in particular will be covered in more detail in Chapter 3. Iceland, already enjoying a closer relationship with China than most AC states following its 2005 initiation of Europe's first free trade agreement, 2013 construction of a large Chinese Embassy in Reykjavík, and expressed interest in a \$200 million tourist facility in Grímsstaðir by Beijing Zhongkun Investment Group, established the "China-Iceland Joint Aurora Observatory" in 2018.⁷² Of all Arctic states, Iceland serves as the principle co-development model with China. Since 2016, Greenland has become a major focus for Chinese investment and bilateral exchange, stressing domestic relationships with Denmark. In addition to several mining activities, China has

⁶⁹ Dodds, "The Ilulissat Declaration (2008)," 52.

⁷⁰ Arctic Council, "Observers."

⁷¹ Kevin Xie, "Some BRICS in the Arctic: Developing Powers Look North," *Harvard International Review* 36, no. 3 (Spring 2015): 61, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43649295>.

⁷² Landriault, Chater, Rowe, and Lackenbauer, *Governing Complexity in the Arctic Region*, 3; Ping and Lanteigne, "China's Developing Arctic Policies," 2-3.

also courted Greenland with proposals for an Arctic research station, satellite ground station, and infrastructure renovation projects.⁷³ A 2018 study published in the *Arctic Yearbook* that examined both Chinese policy and academic materials concluded China's interest in Greenland can best be expressed by the two types of mining projects currently in its focus: zinc and rare earth elements (REE). As China's own domestic zinc mining reserves are among the world's largest, its Citronen Fjord zinc project is most likely designed to gain strategic access rather than the actual resource. Its Kvanefjeld REE project meanwhile, is primarily intended to obtain the resource itself, one it considers "strategic" in its own right.⁷⁴ China's interest in Greenland will be covered in much greater detail in Chapter 2.

The Russian government-sponsored "Territory of Dialogue, International Arctic Forum," established in 2010 and occurring on a biannual basis since 2017, represents one of the more aggressive policy and development-focused collaborations with China outside the AC. According to its Russian government website, the Territory of Dialogue offers an opportunity for "socioeconomic development of Arctic regions and for developing multi-level, multilateral mechanisms for joint discovery and effective exploitation of the Arctic's rich natural resource potential."⁷⁵ It specifically promotes itself as a forum for non-Arctic states like China, India, South Korea, Singapore and

⁷³ Office of the Secretary of Defense, "Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," 114, U.S. Department of Defense, May 2, 2019, https://media.defense.gov/2019/May/02/2002127082/-1/-1/1/2019_CHINA_MILITARY_POWER_REPORT.pdf.

⁷⁴ Patrik Andersson, Jesper Willaing Zeuthen and Per Kalvig, "Chinese Mining in Greenland: Arctic Access or Access to Minerals?" *Arctic Yearbook*, 1, https://arcticyearbook.com/images/yearbook/2018/China-and-the-Arctic/7_AY2018_Andersson.pdf.

⁷⁵ Trade Representative of the Russian Federation in Japan, "Arctic: Territory of Dialogue 4th International Arctic Forum," June 2, 2017, <http://japan.ved.gov.ru/en/news/46355>.

others to have a voice in the region's economic, scientific, and "environmental management" opportunities outside of what it considers an Arctic policy arena already "well represented" by Western states.⁷⁶ During its 5th meeting, held in St. Petersburg in April 2019, Russia and China signed an agreement establishing the joint Chinese-Russian Arctic Research Center. The center's activities will be overseen by scientists from the Institute of Oceanology at the Russian Academy of Sciences and Qingdao National Laboratory for Marine Science and Technology.⁷⁷

The China-Nordic Arctic Research Center (CNARC) is one of China's most robust science-diplomatic frameworks for forging partnerships with Nordic states. Established in Shanghai in 2013 in conjunction with China's Polar Research Institute (PRIC), CNARC is widely considered a successful epistemic community, or even a track-two diplomatic forum between 20 academic and research organizations from China, Denmark-Greenland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Iceland. Russian, U.S., and South Korean representatives have also participated as CNARC observers.⁷⁸ Unlike the AC, CNARC has not limited its purview to environmental sustainability. Although science nominally remains at its foundation, CNARC's "Economic Roundtable" also involves business, media, NGOs, and political interests, including Chinese shipping, infrastructure

⁷⁶ Trade Representative of the Russian Federation in Japan, "Arctic: Territory of Dialogue 4th International Arctic Forum."

⁷⁷ Pavel Devyatkin, "Russian and Chinese Scientists to Establish Arctic Research Center," *High North News*, April 15, 2019, <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/russian-and-chinese-scientists-establish-arctic-research-center>.

⁷⁸ Su Ping and Maximilian Mayer, "Science Diplomacy and Trust Building: 'Science China' in the Arctic," *Global Policy* 9, (November, 2018): 24, doi:<http://dx.doi.org.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/10.1111/1758-5899.12576>; Yang Jian, "Four Impacts from the China-Nordic Arctic Research Center," in *The Arctic in World Affairs: A North Pacific Dialogue on Building Capacity for a Sustainable Arctic in a Changing Global Order*, eds. Robert W. Corell, Jong Deog Kim, Yoon Hyung Kim, Oran R. Young (Busan, South Korea: Korea Maritime Institute and East-West Center, 2017): 291.

developers, and legal and political scholarship in parallel with CNARC's other initiatives.⁷⁹ Past conferences have included topics such as China and Iceland's joint infrastructure projects and Arctic tourism. According to Yang Jian of the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, CNARC has led to knowledge diffusion of multiple hard and social science disciplines from Nordic countries to China and greater Asia while lessening suspicion of Chinese Arctic intentions. Given Chinese academia's role in producing and directing Chinese policy, CNARC is credited in playing a prominent role in the evolution of China and Nordic states' greater Arctic policies, including an increasing focus on global governance related to climate change.⁸⁰ This has in turn also increased scientific collaboration between China and other rising Arctic states such as Japan and South Korea.⁸¹ Finally, many of the same Chinese and Nordic scientists are credited in setting up two China-U.S. Arctic Social Science Forums with the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) between 2015-2016, combining researchers from the Nordics, China, and a prominent U.S. think tank.⁸²

In addition to the decade's growth of Arctic scientific and multi-disciplinary forums, the establishment of joint research stations throughout the Arctic region appears to have increased since 2016. With the exception of its Svalbard Yellow River station, each of these projects occurred following or in conjunction with bilateral energy or mining agreements as seen in Table 1's timeline. The synthesis of resource exploitation and scientific research has not gone unnoticed. A 2019 U.S. Department of Defense

⁷⁹ Ping and Mayer, "Science Diplomacy and Trust Building," 26-27.

⁸⁰ Bertelsen and Su, "Knowledge-Based Institutions in Sino-Arctic Engagement: Lessons for the Belt and Road Initiative," 153-154; Jian, "Four Impacts from the China-Nordic Arctic Research Center," 293, 295, 297.

⁸¹ Jian, "Four Impacts from the China-Nordic Arctic Research Center," 298.

⁸² Bertelsen, "The International Political Systemic Context of Arctic Marine Resource Governance," 15.

report to Congress entitled “Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China,” directly links Arctic scientific exploration with incipient Chinese commercialization and even possible future militarization. The report also mentions Denmark’s concern over Chinese meddling in domestic policies over Greenland’s future.⁸³ The Arctic Institute, a non-profit Arctic research organization based in Washington D.C., has compiled studies on other Arctic nations’ private reactions to Chinese activities. The institute notes that while scientific and private business interests have warmed to Chinese regional involvement, state defense and intelligence agencies, including Sweden’s Defense Agency, the Finnish Security Intelligence Service, and Norwegian Foreign Intelligence Services remain wary of Chinese motivations behind what are officially described as scientific endeavors.⁸⁴

It is likely that while China’s official Arctic voyages, conducted by its government research vessels, as well information gleaned via SOE transits through opening Arctic straits have served dual use purposes, jointly operated research centers will retain a purely scientific purview. Of note, China’s Arctic research expeditions have included representatives from a host of Arctic and non-Arctic states including Japan and South Korea until 2009 and the U.S. through 2016.⁸⁵ The geopolitics surrounding these cut off years are worthy of additional study and very likely relate to strategic friction in unrelated spheres. It is highly unlikely that physical centers with projects shared with

⁸³ Office of the Secretary of Defense, “Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China,” 114.

⁸⁴ Sanna Kopra, “China and its Arctic Trajectories: The Arctic Institute’s China Series 2020,” The Arctic Institute, March 17, 2020, <https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/china-arctic-trajectories-the-arctic-institute-china-series-2020/>; Niklas Pollard and Christian Shepherd, “Xi Says China, Finland to Increase Cooperation Under China-EU Framework,” *Reuters*, April 5, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-finland-china-idUSKBN1771CX>.

⁸⁵ Ping and Mayer, “Science Diplomacy and Trust Building,” 25.

Nordic scientists would be used for surreptitious purposes. However, as will be discussed in Chapter 3, warming commercial and strategic relations with Russia may involve more than simply scientific partnerships. At the moment, scientific forums and joint scientific infrastructure construction most likely represent one of China's multiple avenues for cooperative Arctic discourse, setting up advantageous commercial prospects, and larger regional influence. This also features cooperative scientific ventures with representatives from other extra-territorial states, including with Japan and South Korea with which China has dynamic and adversarial relationships in other global theaters. Notable exchanges between these states include an April 2016 Trilateral High-Level Dialogue on the Arctic hosted in Seoul, South Korea between the Arctic ambassadors of the three Asian powers regarding scientific research ventures related to climate change and sustainable development.⁸⁶ Projects such as the Nippon Foundation of Japan and General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans' (GEBCO) Seabed 2030 Project, a collaborative sea floor mapping mission led by scientists from 15 nations including China, Russia, South Korea, Japan, the U.S., and Nordic states, demonstrate one form of operationalized Arctic knowledge networks contributing to a globally-recognized gain.⁸⁷ The Multidisciplinary Drifting Observatory for the Study of Arctic Climate (MOSAiC) project, comprised of 80 research institutions from 20 states including China, Japan, South Korea, Russia, and the U.S. is another.⁸⁸ Significantly, China appears willing to embrace collaborative science in

⁸⁶ Bertelsen, "The International Political Systemic Context of Arctic Marine Resource Governance," 15; "S. Korea, Japan, China Hold Talks on Arctic Affairs," *The Korea Times*, 28 April 2016, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2016/04/120_203592.html.

⁸⁷ Martin Jakobsson et al., "The International Bathymetric Chart of the Arctic Ocean Version 4.0," *Science Data* 7, no. 176 (July, 2020), 1, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41597-020-0520-9>.

⁸⁸ "Partner Institutions," MOSAiC, accessed December 6, 2020, <https://mosaic-expedition.org/team/partner-institutions/>.

the Arctic with rival powers and has not shown significant signs of dominating or excluding them from such forms of cooperation.

Table 1. Timeline of Developing Bilateral Agreements, Alternative Forums, or Joint Projects between AC Member States and China					
<i>Iceland</i>	2005 Free Trade Agreement (FTA) initiated		2013 Arctic Circle Forum FTA finalized Chinese Embassy Completed		2018 China-Iceland Joint Aurora Observatory
<i>Denmark (Greenland)</i>			2013 Chinese delegations present at announcement of Greenland Self-Government Agreement (SGA), Large Scale Projects Act	2016 Sichuan Xinye Mining Investment Corporation- Isua iron mine Australia Iron Bark and China Nonferrous Metal Industry's Foreign Engineering and Construction (NFC) Citronen Fjord zinc project 2017 Plans announced for joint China-Greenland polar research base	Present Chinese Non-Ferrous Metal Mining Group; Leshan Shenghe Rare Earth Co projects in Kvanefjeld
<i>Russia</i>		2010 Territory of Dialogue International Arctic Forum	2014 30-year agreement on Power of Siberia gas pipeline (China–Russia East-Route natural gas pipeline)	2016 COSCO deep water port and railroad at Archangelsk, Russia Far Eastern Federal University in Russia, Chinese Harbin Polytechnic University est. Russian-Chinese Polar Engineering and Research Center in collaboration with Russian Rosneft engineering corporation Valdai Club conference: East China Normal University 2017 4 th International Arctic Forum Yamal LNG project with China National Petroleum Corporation	2019 Plan for joint Sino-Russian Arctic Research Center launched 5 th International Arctic Forum

<i>Canada</i>		2010 Jilin Jien Nickel Industry Co. Ltd, Deception Bay nickel concentrate mine	2013 COSCO sends first commercial ship <i>Yongsheng</i> from Dalian to Rotterdam via Northwest Passage	2016 Support to Canadian claims over the disputed Northwest Passage in its “Arctic Navigation Guide (Northwest Passage)” manual in preparation for 2017 passage by Chinese Xuelong “Snow Dragon” research vessel	
<i>Finland</i>				2017 President Xi Jinping claims China will “seize the opportunity of Finland’s rotating chairmanship of the Arctic Council to enhance cooperation in Arctic affairs and promote environmental protection and sustainable development of the Arctic”	2018 Chinese Academy of Science announces joint Arctic space research center in Sodankylä
<i>Norway</i>	2004 Yellow River Research Station est. in Svalbard				2018 Yellow River Station emphasized in China’s Arctic Policy
<i>Combined Nordic, Other</i>	2006- Arctic Frontiers Panel 2008 “Common Concern for the Arctic” forum – Nordic Council		2013- China-Nordic Arctic Research Council (CNARC)		Present Proposed <i>Arctic Corridor</i> rail project, linking Kirkenes, Norway and Rovaniemi, Finland Baltic Sea tunnel proposal between Helsinki and Tallinn, Estonia
<i>U.S.</i>				2015-2016 China-US Arctic Social Science Forum 2017 Sinopec, China Investment Corp, Bank of China LNG deal with Alaskan Gasline Development Corp	

As in all aspects of Chinese emergence as an Arctic power, there is a wide divergence of scholarship on the subject of the AC’s continuing viability amidst challenges from outside developments. Timo Koivurova discounts fears of a usurpation

of the Arctic regime, pointing to the continuing existence and Chinese respect of UNCLOS, the IMO, and multinational agreements like the UNFCCC. He argues the AC's successful involvement in brokering agreements like the 2011 Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue exemplifies a durable organizational model.⁸⁹ While the 2011 SAR agreement predated China's AC entrance, more recent AC-and Chinese supported statutes like the IMO's binding 2017 Polar Code and 2018 Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean continue to support Koivurova's assertion. In collaboration with Piotr Graczyk, Koivurova also notes the AC's foundational documents that put limits on the power of Observers to unduly influence the AC's decisions through excessive financing or adding institutional burdens.⁹⁰

The AC appears to be somewhat heeding the advice of scholars like Stokke and Landriault et al., who as of 2019 still cautioned that the current AC regime, dominated by states, is not complete without suitable forums in which other voices like NGOs, businesses, and scientific interests perceive avenues of influence.⁹¹ Although the AC continues to exclude corporate interests and maintains its focus on sustainability and environment stewardship, as of 2017, it has invited multiple new partners and NGOs to participate as Observers (Table 2). Of these, the IMO offers the most favorable avenue

⁸⁹ Koivurova, "The Arctic Council: A Testing Ground for New International Environmental Governance," 137-138, 140-142.

⁹⁰ Piotr Graczyk and Timo Koivurova, "A New Era in the Arctic Council's External Relations? Broader Consequences of the Nuuk Observer Rules for Arctic Governance," *Polar Record* 50, no. 254 (January 2013): 228, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247412000824>.

⁹¹ Olav S. Stokke, "Regime Interplay in Arctic Shipping Governance: Explaining Regional Niche Selection," *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics* 13, no. 1 (March 2013): 68, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10784-012-9202-1>; Landriault, Chater, Rowe, and Lackenbauer, *Governing Complexity in the Arctic Region*, 3.

for courting international shipping interests —of particular importance to China —albeit within already internationally recognized and binding frameworks like the Polar Code.

Table 2. Arctic Council’s List of Intergovernmental and NGOs Added Since 2013		
<i>Organization</i>	<i>Year Admitted</i>	<i>Focus/Charter/Mission</i>
International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)	2017	Network of scientific groups focused on sustainability of the oceans
OSPAR Commission	2017	EU + 15 governments focused on northeast Atlantic marine conservancy
World Meteorological Organization (WMO)	2017	International meteorological data exchange
West Nordic Council (WNC)	2017	Greenland, Iceland, Faroe Islands parliamentary forum
Oceana	2017	International ocean advocacy NGO
International Maritime Organization (IMO)	2019	Shipping safety and the prevention of marine and atmospheric pollution

Despite permitting entry of these new participants, the AC is likely to continue to face criticism over its structural inability to better contain forces detrimental to its environmentally focused charter. Though this criticism is unlikely to erode international recognition of the AC’s advocacy role, as mining, shipping, and dual-purpose research interests continue to develop in the region in parallel with climate change and spurred on by Chinese investment, the AC may need to reproach its “architecture of governance.”⁹² Some scholars like Oran Young have suggested initiating a more binding intergovernmental treaty system, that both maintains the AC’s science-based foundation while better including new global actors.⁹³ The challenge of establishing a larger, more

⁹² Young, “Is It Time for a Reset in Arctic Governance?” 3.

⁹³ Young, “Is It Time for a Reset in Arctic Governance?” 3, 8.

globalized system include lack of support by Arctic territorial states, and increasing what critics have already observed as a degradation of decisiveness and communication between the ACs's organizational strata. Jennifer Spence's study of the AC as a "boundary organization," or one that inherently brings together disparate groups, found that international pressure to evolve the AC from a simple post Cold War Arctic advocacy forum into a modern strategic-level IO has come with notable efficiency costs. This is particularly evident in the wariness displayed by Member state government representatives to take strong positions on Arctic issues that may have greater strategic consequences for their respective governments.⁹⁴ Nonetheless, the 1959 Antarctic Treaty system along with its subsequent environmental annexes offers an existing diplomatic example, and a historical parable against exclusivity.

Case Study: The 1959 Antarctic Treaty. A Triumph of Scientific Cooperation over Imperialism in Adverse Environments, and an Arctic Model?

In several studies examining the effects of adverse physical environments on international cooperative institutions, scholars point to the natural tendency of states to work together even if in competition elsewhere. For example, in Michael Byers's article "Cold, Dark, and Dangerous: International Cooperation in the Arctic and Space," he explores the reasons why Russia and the U.S., along with the AC's other NATO states, maintained relatively positive interactions in their polar and outer space relationships, despite conflict over the 2014 annexation of Crimea. Byers argues that these adverse and austere environments uniquely condition and demand cooperation among associated states, allowing them to withstand strong competing pressures to engage in conflict.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Spence, "Is a Melting Arctic Making the Arctic Council Too Cool?" 804, 807.

⁹⁵ Michael Byers, "Cold, Dark, and Dangerous: International Cooperation in the Arctic and Space," *Polar Record* 55 (June 2019): 32-33, 42, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247419000160>.

Along a similar line of thought, Ingrid Lundestad and Øystein Tunsjø cite the Arctic's challenging environment, lack of corresponding support infrastructure, and existing diplomatic institutionalism as reasons why there has been a lack of escalation in the rivalry between China and the U.S. The authors also state that these unique physical and geopolitical factors represent positive means for future cooperation even if environmental changes continue to increase the Arctic's strategic and commercial value.⁹⁶ The examples above on China's embrace of cooperative Arctic science offer continuing support to these theories. Lessons from the Antarctic Treaty also support this argument, demonstrating that a cooperative method of scientifically understanding, rather than conquering nature, may be an answer to increased inclusion in the Arctic region as well.

Notably, the Antarctic's human, geopolitical, and physical environments differ in multiple respects to the Arctic. The South Pole has never been home to traditional tribal lands and does not feature significant expanses of sovereign territories. Small islands falling within the Economic Exclusion Zones of bordering states are the only exceptions. Physically, the bulk of Antarctica is defined by an ice-covered, singular continental land mass, compared to the Arctic's mixture of seven continental shelves, seasonally ice-covered archipelagic waters and the central Arctic Ocean. Given its geographical location and composition, Antarctica was never sought out as a potential bridge between major desirable commercial regions. However, while Antarctica has a shorter human history than the Arctic, it too has been subject to strategic exploration, commercialization, and related attempts at resource claim since the 18th century. As this study will examine, the development and maintenance of the Antarctic Treaty system, in concert with the South

⁹⁶ Ingrid Lundestad and Øystein Tunsjø, "The United States and China in the Arctic," *Polar Record* 51, no. 259 (May 2014): 393, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247414000291>.

Pole's adverse environmental conditions, ultimately led to the successful implementation of a science-based cooperative regime there. This governance model mirrors the AC's science-forward and cooperative foundation, and also offers lessons against territorial-based organizational hierarchies.

Twentieth century state interactions over the Antarctic prior to the implementation of the Antarctic Treaty were fraught with increasing resource competition. In 1908, the British became the first to lay claim to Antarctic territory, followed soon after by Argentina, Australia, Chile, New Zealand, France, and Norway. As Steven Blumenfeld chronicles, competing claims by Antarctic newcomers like the U.S. and Soviet Union were dismissed by the early 20th century's set of great powers, and nearly all Antarctic claimants quickly found themselves quarreling over overlapping territories.⁹⁷ World War II and its immediate aftermath accelerated the potential for conflict, with Argentina and Chile attempting to advance a joint claim over the entire continent in 1941. A war-weary Britain nonetheless still found it essential to dispute its rivals' proclamation, issuing the 1946 Bingham Declaration declaring British commercial and exploratory activities in the region would continue. A string of increasingly aggressive interactions ensued, leading to the first peace accord over the Antarctic in 1949 in which Britain, Argentina, and Chile agreed to a moratorium on warships below 60° South latitude.⁹⁸

In 1947, the U.S., now a global power, ushered in the Cold War by re-attempting its own claim on the Antarctic via Operation *High Jump*. Although publicly promoted as

⁹⁷ Steven Blumenfeld, "For Science and Peace: The Creation and Evolution of the Antarctic Treaty System," *Yale Economic Review* 6, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2010): 29, <https://search-proquest-com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/central/docview/236619837/fulltextPDF/733FA5805ED948C4PQ/1?accountid=11752>.

⁹⁸ Blumenfeld, "For Science and Peace," 29.

a large-scale winter training exercise, the 4,700 soldiers and 13 naval vessels that took part represented the U.S.'s subversive intention to establish an undisputed Antarctic presence and muscle the Soviet Union out of the region.⁹⁹ Diplomatic meetings brokered by the U.S. and other governments took place over the next five years, with the U.S. continually attempting to decrease Soviet influence in the region. Finally, in 1952, an idea for launching the International Geophysical Year (IGY), a derivative of the First and Second Polar Year concepts, gained traction, first in scientific circles and evolving to include government policy makers. The premise behind the Polar and Geophysical Years placed international scientific cooperation over geopolitical competition.¹⁰⁰ Between 1957 and 1959, twelve states including the U.S. and Soviet Union, sent scientific teams to the Antarctic to run joint experiments together.¹⁰¹ Notably, a 1959 CIA report recommended the U.S. use existing scientific institutions like the National Science Foundation versus defense capabilities to influence the Antarctic's geopolitical environment.¹⁰² Riding a wave of IGY optimism, the U.S. initiated what became the 1959 Antarctic Treaty, one based on scientific cooperation that prevented future unilateral claims to the continent.

The Antarctic Treaty has added additional provisions aimed at protecting the vulnerable polar environment and ecosystem since coming into force in 1961. One of its most diplomatically challenging updates was the 1988 Convention on the Regulation of

⁹⁹ Lintott, "The Coldest Front: The Central Intelligence Agency & American Antarctic Policy & Operations (1947-59)"; Blumenfeld, "For Science and Peace," 29.

¹⁰⁰ Aant Elzinga, "Through the Lens of the Polar Years: Changing Characteristics of Polar Research in Historical Perspective," *Polar Record* 45, no. 235 (2009): 315, doi:10.1017/S0032247409008316.

¹⁰¹ Blumenfeld, "For Science and Peace," 31.

¹⁰² Lintott, "The Coldest Front: The Central Intelligence Agency & American Antarctic Policy & Operations (1947-59)."

Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities, which later evolved into the 1991 Madrid Protocol. States have long sought the Antarctic's mineral resources, an underlying reason for many of the 20th century's scientific expeditions. Again, the Antarctic Treaty system succeeded, establishing a 50-year ban on mineral exploitation.¹⁰³ Lessons from the Madrid Protocol deserves greater comparative study with the Arctic's more sovereignty-laden territorial environment, the AC's current organizational structure, and increasing global pursuit of the region's natural resources due to climate change.

While the Antarctic human and physical environment differs from the Arctic, potential lessons are apparent in its enduring structure. For one, the diffusion of scientific exchanges into government policies draws parallels to the Arctic's modern epistemic communities and their own influence on Chinese and other state Arctic strategies. Science-diplomacy is also apparent in various manifestations in the modern Arctic, joining together scientists from states including the U.S., China, and Russia in peaceful cooperative projects, despite conflicts elsewhere. However, more time is necessary to prove whether these collaborative enterprises may spur on larger strategic-level change in national policies. The Antarctic Treaty also provides an easy comparison to the consequences of exclusionary behavior. At the turn of the 20th century, the U.S. was pushed to the periphery, and once achieving its own great power status, attempted to do the same to other states. Reflecting modern critiques over the AC's voting and power dynamics, in 1983, the Malaysian government issued an official complaint to the UN, stating the Antarctic Treaty was designed, structured, and maintained solely by global

¹⁰³ Blumenfeld, "For Science and Peace," 33.

powers leaving developing states out as more dominate states decided global policy over the region.¹⁰⁴ Malaysia's criticism eventually led to a system of increased inclusion.

Today, 54 states are member to the Antarctic Treaty, divided not along territorial lines, but rather based on their current level of scientific contribution into "Consultative" and "Non-Consultative" parties.¹⁰⁵ Certainly, this composition still presents potential avenues for strategic maneuver given that "polar identity" is considered among the necessary trappings of international prestige,¹⁰⁶ but the construct reduces the ability of states to act outside of purely scientific pursuits. In the coming decades, as polar ice-melt continues, imposing a similar governance over unclaimed areas of the Arctic Ocean, or even the entire Arctic region, may be the best means for furthering global cooperation while protecting vulnerable resources. Such a system would recognize China's outward pursuit of polar research and strategic desire for international legitimacy, while minimizing or at least exposing, more subversive attempts at resource access. However, such a system would require high levels of international leadership, multiple stakeholder concurrence, and if comprising currently claimed or disputed areas such as extended continental shelves, likely undesirable forfeitures of Arctic resources. The AC's current construction as a "low politics"¹⁰⁷ arena governed by select states, while ideal for its regional advocacy role, may not be well suited to singularly advance such a comprehensive concept.

Conclusion

¹⁰⁴ Blumenfeld, "For Science and Peace," 34.

¹⁰⁵ "Parties," Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty, accessed April 7, 2020, <https://www.ats.aq/devAS/Parties?lang=e>.

¹⁰⁶ Aki Tonami, "Influencing the Imagined 'Polar Regions': The Politics of Japan's Arctic and Antarctic Policies," *Polar Record* 53, no. 5 (2017): 489-490, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247417000419>.

¹⁰⁷ Young, "Is It Time for a Reset in Arctic Governance?" 4.

China's 2018 proclamation of "Near-Arctic" statehood heralds a changing dynamic in the Arctic geopolitical landscape. The forces of climate change are globalizing what once was an AC regime characterized by regional advocacy, structured along likewise regional territorial interests. China, to a lesser extent other AC Observers, and external scientific and commercial forums, are the primary challengers to this institutional exclusivity. China routinely courts individual AC states through commercial and scientific bilateral projects, advancing new international recognition of its peripheral Arctic role. By examining Chinese actions through the lens of exclusion-peripheralization theory, as well as the AC's own evolution over the last two decades, this study sought to gauge the continuing viability of the AC. Evidence shows China is embarking on a campaign to restructure international perspectives on its Arctic capabilities, in line with its larger strategic ambitions, while also demonstrating an enthusiastic willingness to participate in both the AC's current structure and new external knowledge networks and forums. While outside organizations have expanded as a result of the AC's exclusivity and continued focus on environmental sustainability, they do not seem to pose a significant threat to the AC's international value as an advocacy organization. Additionally, the AC's gradual inclusion of other respected organizations has likely strengthened its validity, making it more desirable a platform in which emerging powers can claim association. However, as Arctic commercial prospects and dual-use joint research projects and institutions continue to increase along its periphery, an AC organizational restructure proffering greater inclusion and perhaps more binding intergovernmental agreements may be required. An examination of the Antarctic Treaty regime offers one such example of an international governance system where power is

derived from individual state scientific contributions rather than territory. This system required strong scientific and international leadership at its beginning, organizational flexibility through the end of the Cold War period, and continued international willingness to place collective scientific gain over individual state resource advantage.

Chapter 2: A Future *Kalaallit Nunaat*: Measuring U.S. and Chinese Influence Amidst Greenland’s Evolving Independence Movement

Introduction

On August 29, 2017, Chinese polar research vessel *Xue Long* “*Snow Dragon*” weighed anchor in the Nuup Kangerlua fjord off Nuuk, Greenland and continued its mission to circumnavigate the Arctic Circle.¹⁰⁸ *Xue Long*’s 20,000 nautical mile, 83-day journey — the icebreaker’s eighth mission to the polar regions — was widely heralded in Chinese state media for accomplishing multiple objectives: contributing to international science, advancing the BRI’s component “Silk Road on Ice”, and expanding global influence.¹⁰⁹ International press coverage of the vessel’s presence off Nuuk proved to be a minor footnote in relation to heavy documentation of the ship’s ensuing voyage through the fabled Northwest Passage. However, *Snow Dragon*’s Greenland waypoint was nonetheless notable given the increase in China and Greenland’s commercial and diplomatic relationships over the last two decades in parallel with physical changes to Greenland’s environment and the island’s evolving independence movement. Despite this connection, Danish news outlets seemed to simply repeat wire services’ reporting of the research vessel’s connection to increased Arctic commercial shipping transits.¹¹⁰ Lacking was analysis of the low-profile Greenland visit, occurring just nine months after Denmark’s decision to terminate a Chinese development contract for Grønnedal, a former

¹⁰⁸ Walter Turnowsky, “Kinesisk Isbryder Tester Handelsrute Igennem Nordvestpassagen,” *Sermitsiaq*, September 19, 2017, <https://sermitsiaq.ag/node/200294>.

¹⁰⁹ “Roundup: Belt & Road Initiative Reaches the Arctic,” *Xinhua News Agency - CEIS*, Nov 3, 2017, <https://search-proquest-com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/docview/1960980200?accountid=11752>; “Science Vessel Returns from Arctic,” *China Daily*, October 11, 2017, Hong Kong ed, <https://search-proquest-com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/docview/1960556970?accountid=11752>.

¹¹⁰ Turnowsky, “Kinesisk Isbryder Tester Handelsrute Igennem Nordvestpassagen.”

U.S.-turned-Danish naval base on the island.¹¹¹ This sudden reversal of Chinese commercial fortunes foreshadowed further 2018 U.S.-backed Danish denials of Chinese infrastructure development projects, domestically desired by Greenland, including three new airports in Nuuk, Illulisat, and Quarqurtoq.¹¹²

The geopolitical dynamics at play in Greenland, illustrated by the events surrounding *Snow Dragon*, have increased in complexity in parallel with China's expanded Arctic activities as a self-professed "Near Arctic State." As discussed in the introduction, a changing Arctic physical environment is dramatically altering the far north's politics. A once regional socio-economic and diplomatic landscape is transforming to encompass wide-ranging global interests, which in turn further act upon the geopolitical domain. The continuing evolution of Greenland's independence movement offers a window into this change. Historically a domestic dialogue between Greenland's majority indigenous population and their former colonizer Denmark, the question of independence now involves pursuit of external sponsors, like China, to advance its development.¹¹³ Greenland's openness to new parties, along with the island's

¹¹¹ Camilla T. N. Sørensen, "China is in the Arctic to Stay as a Great Power: How China's Increasingly Confident, Proactive and Sophisticated Arctic Diplomacy Plays into Kingdom of Denmark Tensions," *Arctic Yearbook* (2018): 9, https://arcticyearbook.com/images/yearbook/2018/China-and-the-Arctic/3_AY2018_Sorensen.pdf; Ulrik P. Gad, Naja Dyrendom Graugaard, Anders Holgersen, Marc Jacobsen, Nina Lave, and Nikoline Schriver, "Imagining China on Greenland's Road to Independence," *Arctic Yearbook* (2018): 12, https://arcticyearbook.com/images/yearbook/2018/China-and-the-Arctic/1_AY2018_Gad.pdf; Blake Hounshell, "Pompeo Aims to Counter China's Ambitions in the Arctic," *Politico*, May 6, 2019, <https://www.politico.com/story/2019/05/06/pompeo-arctic-china-russia-1302649>.

¹¹² Drew Hinshaw and Jeremy Page, "How the Pentagon Countered China's Designs on Greenland; Washington Urged Denmark to Finance Airports that Chinese Aimed to Build on North America's Doorstep," *Wall Street Journal (Online)*, Feb 10, 2019, <https://search-proquest-com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/docview/2177915898?accountid=11752>; Rasmus Kjærgaard Rasmussen, "The Desecuritization of Greenland's Security? How the Greenlandic Self-government Envision Postindependence National Defense and Security Policy," *Arctic Yearbook* (2019): 7, https://arcticyearbook.com/images/yearbook/2019/Scholarly-Papers/15_AY2019_Rasmussen.pdf.

¹¹³ Frank Sejersen, "Brokers of Hope: Extractive Industries and the Dynamics of Future-Making in Post-Colonial Greenland," *Polar Record* (2019): 1, doi:10.1017/S0032247419000457.

strategic position and expanding access to its natural resource potential, have attracted greater Chinese diplomatic engagement, and resulting U.S. concerns.

The purpose of this chapter is to determine which entities, the U.S., Denmark, China, affiliated IOs, or other external powers are best postured to answer Greenland's independence needs. It also attempts prediction on which might will hold relevancy following Greenland's eventual independence. As Mia Bennett posits, future influence in the Arctic will likely be decided on which groups influence lasting changes to environmental protection, human security, and resource exploitation.¹¹⁴ Greenland offers unique socio-political perspectives on each of these concepts. Its contemporary independence narratives weave modern history with ancient Inuit cultural values. Much of its 20th century experience involves heavy Danish and U.S. military and diplomatic presence, and thus both states heavily factor into questions of its independence. In keeping with exclusion-peripheralization theory, by long marginalizing Greenland, the U.S. and Denmark have unintentionally incentivized the island's pursuit of new, perhaps more beneficial relationships outside established norms. China's Arctic activities have begun to come into focus with wide interpretations of its intent, including in Greenland. Despite a wealth of contemporary Arctic geopolitical literature, gaps remain in appropriately bridging Greenland's specific independence convictions with the strengths and limitations of U.S., Danish, Chinese, and prominent IO Arctic policies.

Following a review of existing literature on on relevant state and IO activity in Greenland, focused primarily on the U.S., Denmark, and China, we will build our approach to questions of future influence in Greenland along historical, cultural, socio-

¹¹⁴ Mia Bennett, "At the Arctic Circle Forum."

economic, and diplomatic lines of evidence. Analysis will begin with a brief modern history of Greenland, cataloguing domestic relations with Denmark and international interactions focused on the U.S. and China. This scene-setter is designed to bring context to subsequent examination of Greenland's contemporary independence rhetoric. It is important to note that not all Greenlanders' opinions are represented here. Additionally, like other Euro-centric interpretations on Greenland's motivations, this author acknowledges personal gaps in adequately relaying all aspects of cultural context. We will then embark on an individual study of China and the U.S.'s more recent policies toward Greenland from the perspective of each of Greenland's main independence narratives. Larger NATO, West Nordic, and EU interactions are also included within this survey, but their roles are worthy of further study. Finally, we will forecast which entity is better positioned to answer Greenland's future political, security, and economic requirements.

Since the 1970s, Arctic related literature has increasingly included human security dynamics in addition to more traditional discussion on stewardship of the physical environment.¹¹⁵ An increasing body of Constructivist-tending IR literature attempts to right this lack of recorded indigenous thought in Arctic policy discussion. Mark Jacobsen and Ulrik Gad offer excellent summary of Greenland's cultural foundations for independence, built on competing motivations to preserve Inuit tradition while welcoming some forces of modernity.¹¹⁶ They join with Frank Sejersen and Marc Auchet

¹¹⁵ Annika Nilsson, "The United States and the Making of an Arctic Nation," *Polar Record* 54, no. 275 (2018): 98-99, doi:10.1017/S0032247418000219.

¹¹⁶ Mark Jacobsen and Ulrik Pram Gad, "Setting the Scene in Nuuk: Introducing the Cast of Characters in Greenlandic Foreign Policy Narratives," in *Greenland and the International Politics of a Changing Arctic: Postcolonial Paradplomacy Between High and Low Politics*, eds. Kristian Soby Kristensen and Jon

in explaining Greenland's political reckoning of its colonial past, arguing "Greenlandicization" is highly motivated to reverse Denmark's cultural and diplomatic precedences.¹¹⁷ All believe this accounts for Greenland's tendencies to gravitate away from NATO; advocate for "sustainable development" rather than solely environmental protectionism; and empathize with with "new" regional actors like China, long regarded as an Arctic 'Other' by the West.¹¹⁸ These beliefs are at the root of Greenland's independence vision and represent inroads for states wishing to engage with the island.

Previously elucidated in Chapter 1, Chinese Arctic motivations are diverse and evolve along with contribution from internal and external influence mechanisms. China's interests in Greenland since 2013 display similar variances, demonstrated in resulting literature's analysis and policy recommendations. Conclusions range from classifying Chinese activities as purely logical to more cynical (and at times patronizing) perspectives on its intent to exploit a vulnerable Greenland population. Realists such as Lau Blaxekjaer, Marc Lanteigne, Mingming Shi, and Deng Beixi define Chinese Arctic designs as "modest, pragmatic, and prudent," with its Greenland interests in line with larger economic and science-based global expansion of influence, rather than a more sinister land grab.¹¹⁹ Aki Tonami agrees, arguing China is not exercising Arctic

Rahbek-Clemmensen (Milton: Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 11, 13, accessed June 4, 2020, ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹¹⁷ Sejersen, "Brokers of Hope," 1; Marc Auchet, "Greenland at the Crossroads," *International Journal* 66, no. 4 (Autumn, 2011): 960, <https://search-proquest-com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/docview/920587791?accountid=11752>.

¹¹⁸ Jacobsen and Gad, "Setting the Scene in Nuuk," 21-22; Gad et al., "Imagining China on Greenland's Road to Independence," 1-2; Auchet, "Greenland at the Crossroads," 967.

¹¹⁹ Lau O. Blaxekjaer, Marc Lanteigne, and Mingming Shi, "The Polar Silk Road and the West Nordic Region," *Arctic Yearbook* (2018): 1, https://arcticyearbook.com/images/yearbook/2018/Scholarly_Papers/25_AY2018_Blaxekjr-Lanteigne.pdf; Deng Beixi, "Shipping Matters: The Role of Arctic Shipping in Shaping China's Engagement in Arctic Resource Development," *Arctic Yearbook* (2018): 1-2, https://arcticyearbook.com/images/yearbook/2018/China-and-the-Arctic/4_AY2018_Deng.pdf.

revisionism but rather a “gradual rise.”¹²⁰ Beixi further points to China’s use of established diplomatic strategies, as well as its focus on advertising proficiency in infrastructure and engineering projects that appeal to Arctic customers like Greenland.¹²¹ U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) memorandums on the Arctic have increasingly used the phrase ‘strategic competition’ and expressed skepticism on the underlying motives behind China’s use of regional science diplomacy and economic incentives.¹²² Since 2016, U.S. policy documents and speeches cite China’s militaristic activities in East Asia and exploitative relationships in Africa as warnings for Greenland’s potential future. Academics, like Camilla Sørensen and Mia Bennett, share the DoD’s concerns. Sørensen claims Greenland represents an avenue for China to achieve “great power influence,” which she believes supersedes more pragmatic interests like simple resource access.¹²³ Bennett argues China’s international revisionist strategy is being applied to the Arctic using a variety of diplomatic tools, including attempts to promote its own “Near Arctic Peoples,” as a means of ingratiating itself with Greenland’s majority indigenous population.¹²⁴ Perhaps at least some of the critical observers are also in part affected by the “disproportional investment” potential of Greenland, given its population of only 57,000, as compared to Chinese investments and infrastructure projects in more populous Arctic states.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ Aki Tonami, *Asian Foreign Policy In a Changing Arctic: The Diplomacy of Economy and Science At New Frontiers* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), 25-26.

¹²¹ Beixi, “Shipping Matters,” 3-4.

¹²² Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy, “Report to Congress Department of Defense Arctic Strategy,” 1-3, 7; Office of the Secretary of Defense, “Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China,” 114.

¹²³ Sørensen, “China is in the Arctic to Stay as a Great Power,” 1.

¹²⁴ Bennett, “At the Arctic Circle Forum.”

¹²⁵ Kossa, “China’s Arctic Engagement: Domestic Actors and Foreign Policy,” 28-29.

Liberals see China's Arctic interests as a potential boon for development of existing regional institutions, like the AC. Additionally, new "science diplomacy" forums that include traditionally ostracized state and non-state parties like China and Greenland are welcomed by many in the region who see a need for better synchronizing the interests of commercial and environmental stakeholders.¹²⁶ Su and Mayer define science diplomacy "as a set of practices that open up sustained channels of communication and cooperation for the main purpose of producing objective knowledge," with an emphasis on multilateralism. They argue that this new diplomacy track serves as a "stabilizing" force, especially in developing geopolitical theaters like the Arctic.¹²⁷ Even the realist-leaning Bennett and Sørensen promote the idea of science-diplomacy forums for setting cooperative precedences for "extraregional" actors like China.¹²⁸ Blaxekjaer, Lanteigne, and Shi argue for including greater joint participation in science diplomacy between West Nordic countries and China as part of an embrace of a liberal "World Society."¹²⁹ Greenland potentially benefits from such a transition from state-dominated discourse, given its tenuous position between traditional statehood and a less defined indigenous cultural space.

Analysis of the U.S.'s interests in Greenland remain primarily focused on its military history with some very recent discussion in academic and media sources on U.S.

¹²⁶ Ronald E. Doel, Urban Wråkberg, and Suzanne Zeller, "Science, Environment, and the New Arctic," *Journal of Historical Geography* 44 (April, 2014): 3, 11-12, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2013.12.003>; Ping and Mayer, "Science Diplomacy and Trust Building," 23; Bennett, "How China Sees the Arctic: Reading between Extraregional and Intraregional Narratives," *Geopolitics* 20, no. 3 (July, 2015): 660, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2015.1017757>; Sørensen, "China is in the Arctic to Stay as a Great Power," 11.

¹²⁷ Ping and Mayer, "Science Diplomacy and Trust Building," 23.

¹²⁸ Bennett, "How China Sees the Arctic," 660; Sørensen, "China is in the Arctic to Stay as a Great Power," 11.

¹²⁹ Blaxekjaer, Lanteigne, and Shi, "The Polar Silk Road and the West Nordic Region," 12.

influence operations against prospective Chinese projects. Overall analysis on the health of U.S. Arctic diplomatic structures are more limited. Annika Nilsson offers the most comprehensive examination to date on the U.S.'s Arctic diplomatic institutions, cataloging evolving themes that define U.S. strategy. She joins with Katherine Weingartner and Robert Orttung in arguing U.S. Arctic policy efforts have largely depended on, and can be predicted by, the individual doctrines of modern presidential administrations.¹³⁰ Nilsson notes an overall "broadening" of U.S. Arctic security perspective from one anchored by self-interested economic and defensive motivations to a one placing value on cooperation. However, she claims there remains a consistent "economic development and competitiveness" theme.¹³¹ Her opinion significantly differs with Heather Conley who concludes U.S. Arctic policy has "largely remained stagnant," since the Cold War era despite radical shifts in Arctic international politics.¹³² Particularly significant to analysis of the U.S.-Greenland relationship is Nilsson's emphasis on the historical U.S. position towards indigenous issues, which has only gradually changed over the last three decades.

All Arctic states, and the greater international community, will be affected by Greenland's eventual independence. Arguably Denmark, the U.S., China and respective alliance systems stand the most to gain, or lose, depending on which entities Greenland gravitates towards in the coming years. The U.S. and Denmark, remain strategically invested in the island nation. However, over the last decade, China has pursued bilateral

¹³⁰ Nilsson, "The United States and the Making of an Arctic Nation," 95; Katherine A. Weingartner and Robert Orttung, "U.S. Arctic Policymaking under Trump and Obama," *Polar Record* (2020): 1, doi:10.1017/S0032247419000810.

¹³¹ Nilsson, "The United States and the Making of an Arctic Nation," 95, 97.

¹³² Heather A. Conley, "The Implications of U.S. Policy Stagnation toward the Arctic Region," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, May 3, 2019, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/implications-us-policy-stagnation-toward-arctic-region>.

scientific and resource access agreements across the Arctic region, including directly with Greenland tied to its larger BRI, often colloquially called the “Silk Road on Ice.” The remainder of this paper will seek to illustrate the ideal methods to address Greenland’s independence needs, and determine which entities are succeeding in maintaining and/or establishing connections with the island.

Modern History of Greenland: Setting the Stage for External Interests

Greenland’s modern social movements are closely linked to its former role as a Danish colony from the late 1700s to 1953, post-colonial governance, and strategic military and commercial geography. U.S. interests on the island began during WWI, when it first considered purchase of the territory, and continued through WWII given Greenland’s strategic position in the middle of the North Atlantic. During Nazi Germany’s occupation of Denmark, the U.S. began its military presence on the island as a preemptive measure to stop attacks on the American continent and establish a logistics hub. In the first modern defense agreement between the U.S. and Denmark signed in 1941, the U.S. formerly recognized Danish sovereignty over its Greenland territory, but simultaneously assumed the role of wartime protector of the kingdom’s “native Greenland and Danish populations.”¹³³ At the conclusion of WWII, incipient Cold War considerations led the U.S. to again pursue ownership over the island. Ultimately, the U.S. compromised by signing the April 1951 “Defense of Greenland” Agreement, permitting free and continued U.S. military access to Greenland in support of Danish and

¹³³ Kristian Soby Kristensen and Jon Rahbek-Clemmensen, eds, *Greenland and the International Politics of a Changing Arctic: Postcolonial Paradiplomacy Between High and Low Politics* (Milton: Taylor & Francis Group, 2017): 4-5; U.S. Department of State, “Agreement Relating to the Defense of Greenland,” opened for signature April 7, 1941, Executive Agreement Series 204, 55 Stat. 1245, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/b-dk-ust000007-0107.pdf>.

U.S. joint NATO commitments. Notably, the agreement's only mention of Greenland's native population was provided in a negative context within Article VI, where it stated, "every effort will be made to avoid any contact between United States personnel and the local population which the Danish authorities do not consider desirable for the conduct of operations under this Agreement."¹³⁴ Soon after, the U.S. expanded its existing base at Thule, which involved the coerced removal of its former indigenous inhabitants.¹³⁵

Greenland became an administrative district of Denmark in 1953. During this time, Greenland underwent what Marc Auchet describes as a "Danisization," movement where indigenous communities adopted many of the trappings and ideologies of the modern Western European lifestyle. However, this also created a lasting tension between Inuit and industrialized traditions, belief systems, and values. The 1970s saw the first official reckoning of this friction with Greenland's establishment of three organic political parties, transition to greater official use of Greenland's native language, and increased calls for independence.¹³⁶ These developments culminated in the 1979 establishment of Home Rule, whereby Denmark afforded Greenland oversight over its own domestic policies.¹³⁷ Greenland's steps towards further independence, including complete sovereignty over foreign policy matters, continued for the next two decades with the U.S. base at Thule coming under more scrutiny during the late Cold War period. Additionally, during the 1980s-1990s, Greenland made its first attempts to independently court international investors for its mining and fishing industries.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ U.S. Department of State, "Defense of Greenland: Agreement Between the United States and the Kingdom of Denmark," June 8, 1951, Executive Agreement Series 204, 55 Stat. 1245, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/den001.asp.

¹³⁵ Kristensen and Rahbek-Clemmensen, *Greenland and the International Politics of a Changing Arctic*, 5.

¹³⁶ Auchet, "Greenland at the Crossroads," 960.

¹³⁷ Rasmussen, "The Desecuritization of Greenland's Security?" 4.

¹³⁸ Auchet, "Greenland at the Crossroads," 961, 963.

The 1996 establishment of the AC represented a significant opportunity for Greenland's exercise of independent foreign policy, via the inclusion of a Permanent Members organizational body, made up of representatives of the Arctic's indigenous peoples. Notably, the U.S. was initially against including non-state, tribal entities within the organization, but eventually conceded.¹³⁹ The 1990s also saw the first commercial engagements between Greenland and China in what became a failed seal sausage enterprise and a moderately successful seafood trade. However, a controversial 2001 football match between Tibet and Greenland that celebrated colonized indigenous peoples, led to strained relations.¹⁴⁰

The early 2000s featured more progress towards independence and international commercial interest, marked by the 2009 Self-Government Agreement (SGA). The SGA established a framework for Greenland's complete independence, with a block grant system of Danish financial assistance beginning at a yearly contribution of 3.439 million Danish Kroner.¹⁴¹ The block grant system continues through the present, with a planned obsolescence following Greenland's demonstration of a viable, independent economy. The SGA's overarching economic incentive is credited with bolstering international investment, but also changing what was once a "moral" independence movement to one now reliant on achievement of an independent economy.¹⁴² China notably sent delegates to Greenland's official 21 June 2009 celebration of the SGA.¹⁴³ The reliance on

¹³⁹ Nilsson, "The United States and the Making of an Arctic Nation," 100.

¹⁴⁰ Jacobsen and Gad, "Setting the Scene in Nuuk," 18-19.

¹⁴¹ Page Wilson, "An Arctic 'Cold Rush'? Understanding Greenland's (In)dependence Question," *Polar Record* 53, no. 5 (September, 2017): 512, doi:10.1017/S003224741700047X.

¹⁴² Sejersen, "Brokers of Hope," 1.

¹⁴³ Jacobsen and Gad, "Setting the Scene in Nuuk," 18-19.

independent economy was further manifested in Greenland's 2013 passing of the Large Scale Projects Act, which facilitated the growth of foreign development projects.¹⁴⁴ Shortly after the Large Scale Projects Act was signed, China reopened investment interests in Greenland by sending members of its Chinese Development Bank and state-run mining companies to the island in July 2013.¹⁴⁵ Chinese investments continued in Greenland, totaling \$2 billion between 2012-2017, the largest percentage based on GDP of any state in China's \$89.2 billion Arctic infrastructure-focused portfolio. China's overall Arctic investment is estimated as \$1.4 trillion.¹⁴⁶ China's specific mineral investment interests, and infrastructure project proposals, tied to both commercial and strategic motivations will be examined shortly.

U.S. influence on the island and within intra-Danish-Greenland relations featured several developments during the early 2000s. The most promising, and later disappointing, was the 2004 establishment of the Joint Committee between the U.S., Greenland Home Rule government, and Denmark.¹⁴⁷ This was an attempt to move beyond a defense-focused relationship, with the parties pursuing greater "scientific, environmental, economic, commercial, and educational" partnerships.¹⁴⁸ Less desirable were controversial rendition flights through Greenland in support of post 9-11

¹⁴⁴ Wilson, "An Arctic 'Cold Rush?'" 513.

¹⁴⁵ Tonami, *Asian Foreign Policy In a Changing Arctic*, 33.

¹⁴⁶ Mark E. Rosen and Cara B. Thuringer, *Unconstrained Foreign Direct Investment: An Emerging Challenge to Arctic Security* (Arlington, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, Analysis and Solutions, November 2017): 54, https://www.cna.org/CNA_files/PDF/COP-2017-U-015944-1Rev.pdf.

¹⁴⁷ Mikkel Runge Olesen, "Lightning Rod: U.S., Greenlandic and Danish Relations in the Shadow of Postcolonial Reputations," in *Greenland and the International Politics of a Changing Arctic*, 75-76.

¹⁴⁸ U.S. State Department, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, "Fact Sheet: The New Partnership Between the United States and Greenland and Denmark," last modified May 24, 2005, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/fs/46657.htm>; Auchet, "Greenland at the Crossroads," 966.

intelligence operations.¹⁴⁹ Perhaps the most discouraging modern U.S. decision was the 2014 cancellation of its lucrative servicing contract with local Greenland Contractors, which supplied Thule base for over forty years with an annual domestic revenue of \$89 million. The highly publicized 2019 statement by President Trump offering to again purchase Greenland served to rekindle Greenland's negative sentiments on indefinite, free U.S. basing access, and continued frustration over the failure of the Joint Committee.¹⁵⁰

Voices of Greenland's Independence Movement

The themes of Greenland's modern independence movement match well with Bennett's theory on future Arctic influence mentioned in the introduction. Now outfitted with historical background, we will explore Greenland's modern independence rhetoric covering political, security, resource exploitation, and environmental themes. As with any societal study, each of these topics are complex, and this section does not profess to represent every Greenlander's vision of an independent *Kalaallit Nunaat*. After all, a 2019 study found that while 55 percent of Greenlanders believe political independence is important, and predict this number will reach an overwhelming majority by 2035, only 37 percent would be expected to vote in favor of complete independence today.¹⁵¹ However, this section does seek to bring attention to the preeminent issues that continue to shape international interaction and attraction to the island nation. In the case of external

¹⁴⁹ Olesen, "Lightning Rod: U.S., Greenlandic and Danish Relations in the Shadow of Postcolonial Reputations," 70-71.

¹⁵⁰ Jacob Gronholt-Pedersen, "In Spotlight after Trump Offer, Greenland Sees Chance for an Economic Win," *Reuters*, August 27, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-greenland/in-spotlight-after-trump-offer-greenland-sees-chance-for-an-economic-win-idUSKCN1VH1AB>.

¹⁵¹ William C. Wennecke, Rikke Becker Jacobsen, and Carina Ren, "Motivations for Indigenous Island Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurs and Behavioral Economics in Greenland," *Island Studies Journal* 14, no. 2 (November, 2019): 43, 52, <https://doi.org/10.24043/isj.99>.

relationships, some dominant aspects of contemporary independence perspectives, particularly sustainable development goals, are favorable to outside would be investors given alignment with traditional Western Arctic policy perspectives and China's BRI ambitions. Greenland's overall foreign policy and defense preferences are more concerning to the U.S. when considering an increasingly open Arctic political and economic space. While most reviewed academic literature focuses on Greenland's political and international discourse, it must again be reiterated that many recent developments are again affected by environmental change, which offers more open year around access and movement for Greenlanders and foreign entities alike.

The "Greenlandicization" movement as Sejersen, Auchet, Gad, and Jacobsen have described, is based on a pursuit of political distance from many of Denmark's established foreign relationships.¹⁵² Of particular concern to the U.S. and Denmark is the potential gravitation away from NATO towards less established regional constructs. Compared to other Nordic states, Denmark's foreign policy alignment, founded on defense issues, has always tended towards NATO and away from the EU and Nordic Council. For example, as Bailes describes, while it belongs to the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO), Denmark has refused to take part in the Nordic Battle Group's support to the EU.¹⁵³ Greenland on the other hand, celebrates its independent alignment with the West Nordic Council, which does not include Denmark, and has been a staunch proponent of the EU's

¹⁵² Sejersen, "Brokers of Hope," 1; Auchet, "Greenland at the Crossroads," 960; Jacobsen and Gad, "Setting the Scene in Nuuk," 21.

¹⁵³ Alyson J. K. Bailes, "Denmark in Nordic Cooperation: Leader, Player, Sceptic?" *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook* (2016): 32-33, <https://search-proquest-com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/docview/1880436997?accountid=11752>.

acceptance as an official AC Observer.¹⁵⁴ In return for its support via the Association of the Overseas Countries and Territories of the European Union (OCTA), Greenland enjoys a 187 million Kroner yearly educational grant from the EU.¹⁵⁵ Notably, the West Nordic Council has been particularly warm to Chinese Arctic investment, via its “5+1” dialogue on possible Polar Silk Road development projects, and Iceland in particular’s numerous joint projects.¹⁵⁶ Denmark’s own relationship with China is complex given its domestic interests in Chinese partnerships, yet simultaneous concerns for similar projects in Greenland.¹⁵⁷

Inuit cultural tradition and Greenland’s long history of U.S. military use contribute to an aversion to defense dialogues. Thus, this aspect of autonomous statehood, one routinely exercised between NATO partners like the U.S. and Denmark, is not prioritized among native Greenlanders. Jacobsen and Gad argue that the Inuit concept of ‘security’ is instead tied to civil services, not militarization.¹⁵⁸ Rasmus Rasmussen, Kristian Kristensen and Jon Rahbek-Clemmensen expand on this description, with Rasmussen calling Greenland’s culture one of “desecuritization” where a “peaceful high north” is considered ideal. In Greenland, priority is given to expanding economic and environmental opportunities rather than security-related foreign policy agendas.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ Bailes, “Denmark in Nordic Cooperation: Leader, Player, Sceptic?” 41; Auchet, “Greenland at the Crossroads,” 967.

¹⁵⁵ Jacobsen and Gad, “Setting the Scene in Nuuk,” 21; Auchet, “Greenland at the Crossroads,” 967.

¹⁵⁶ Blaxekjaer, Lanteigne, and Shi, “The Polar Silk Road and the West Nordic Region,” 1.

¹⁵⁷ Sejersen, “Brokers of Hope,” 8; Sørensen, “Chinese Investments in Greenland: Promises and Risks as Seen from Nuuk, Copenhagen and Beijing,” in *Greenland and the International Politics of a Changing Arctic*, 84.

¹⁵⁸ Jacobsen and Gad, “Setting the Scene in Nuuk,” 16.

¹⁵⁹ Rasmussen, “The Desecuritization of Greenland’s Security?,” 1; Kristensen and Rahbek-Clemmensen, “Greenlandic Sovereignty in Practice, Uranium, independence, and foreign relations in Greenland between three logics of security,” in *Greenland and the International Politics of a Changing Arctic*, 50.

Rasmussen adds that while this conceptual disconnect between Greenland, Denmark, and the U.S. is not likely to lead to Greenland's immediate post-independence exit from NATO, it remains a challenging hurdle in discussion among the three governments.¹⁶⁰ Given Greenland's cultural disaffection with Western defense concepts, the U.S. and other states would be well served to distance themselves from strategic rhetoric when discussing Greenland's future.

Although not lacking in ironies given China's own human rights record, Greenland's movement away from established Danish norms also includes sympathetic themes towards other groups, including China, traditionally viewed as Arctic outsiders. This concept, discussed at length by Gad et al., has a complicated modern history given Greenland's past criticism of China's relationship to its colonized peoples.¹⁶¹ However, Gad et al., Jacobsen and Gad, and Sejersen all note Greenland's recent outspoken admiration for the relative cultural sensitivities displayed by Chinese investors and diplomatic teams, in comparison to Danish and other "Euro-centrist" delegations. The authors also allude to more subtle ethnic sentiments on closer genetic kinships with Eastern peoples.¹⁶² This is not to say that Greenlanders do not share some wariness with the U.S. and other Western states over potential Chinese projects and related habitation on the island. Given its low population density, any significant Chinese or other developer's presence would be immediately felt, and despite ethnic empathies, would

¹⁶⁰ Rasmussen, "The Desecuritization of Greenland's Security?" 2, 4.

¹⁶¹ Gad et al., "Imagining China on Greenland's Road to Independence," 2-3.

¹⁶² Gad et al., "Imagining China on Greenland's Road to Independence," 6; Jacobsen and Gad, "Setting the Scene in Nuuk," 19; Sejersen, "Brokers of Hope," 8-9.

likely still elicit concern.¹⁶³ Environmental concerns related to mining practices and impact on waterways, fisheries, and significant cultural and local economical landmarks are also present, as evidenced in several small protests organized against the intended practices of mining companies.¹⁶⁴ While Greenland is most likely to align itself to other indigenous groups within the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), cultural awareness is an important value that must be considered in state interactions.

Greenland's perspective on environmental conservation is one that aligns more closely with commercially-minded entities' views on the Arctic's economic promise. Unlike the majority of the AC's member states, Greenland's indigenous interests, communicated through the ICC, have long advocated for "sustainable development" of Arctic resources, encouraging exploitation rather than pursuing policies of complete environmental protectionism. This is a particularly relevant break from Denmark's more mainstream Arctic environmental policy, given Denmark's membership within the AC is geographically contingent on its Greenland territory.¹⁶⁵ Greenland's pursuit of economic independence, codified in the SGA and Large Scale Projects Act, is thereby closely related to this more utilitarian environmental perspective. Thus, while international support for establishing a similar construct in the Arctic to the Antarctic Treaty as discussed in Chapter 1 is still developing, Greenland would almost certainly be opposed given the Treaty's moratorium on resource exploitation.

¹⁶³ Alison Weisburger, "Deficiency of Cultural Sensitivity in The Economist," The Arctic Institute, June 22, 2012, <https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/cultural-insensitivity-economist-arctic/>.

¹⁶⁴ Marco Volpe, "The Tortuous Path of China's Win-Win Strategy in Greenland," The Arctic Institute, March 24, 2020, <https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/tortuous-path-china-win-win-strategy-greenland/>.

¹⁶⁵ Jacobsen and Gad, "Setting the Scene in Nuuk," 21-22.

A great deal of Greenland's modernity dialogues are focused on economic investment, seen by many after the SGA as the primary means for delivering independence. Not lost however, is a concern over the potential social consequences of such rapid development.¹⁶⁶ An important aspect of "Greenlandicization" focuses on achieving domestic prerequisites prior to external investment.¹⁶⁷ Without improvements in education, infrastructure, and population stability, Page Wilson cautions, foreign investment is less likely to benefit Greenlanders themselves.¹⁶⁸ Culturally-based studies on indigenous entrepreneurial activities, have also placed emphasis on the importance of "communal" factors like support to "local cultural pride, family, and place" in addition to gaining economic autonomy.¹⁶⁹ Additionally, not all studies of Greenland's aspirational industrial economy agree that political independence should be contingent on complete economic independence. Adam Grydehøj criticizes this common success metric arguing, that readiness for independence should instead be measured by a state's ability to independently engage with other sovereign states on areas of economic development, which can then facilitate further self-sufficiency.¹⁷⁰ Thus, diplomatic dialogues with Greenland should address other aspects of development as well, especially the furthering of educational and other opportunities for social mobility.

The interplay of factors involved in independence movements, can complicate engagement efforts by other state or non-state parties. When considering post-colonial

¹⁶⁶ Auchet, "Greenland at the Crossroads," 970.

¹⁶⁷ Kevin Foley, "The Politics of Economic Security: Denmark, Greenland and Chinese Mining Investment," in *Greenland and the International Politics of a Changing Arctic*, 99-100.

¹⁶⁸ Wilson, "An Arctic 'Cold Rush?'" 512-514.

¹⁶⁹ Wennecke, Jacobsen, and Ren, "Motivations for Indigenous Island Entrepreneurship," 42, 57.

¹⁷⁰ Adam Grydehøj, "Unravelling economic dependence and independence in relation to island sovereignty: The case of Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland)," *Island Studies Journal* 15, no. 1 (2020): 89, 105-106, <https://doi.org/10.24043/isj.101>.

societies like Greenland, norms established by former colonizers can be expected to change, potentially altering established geopolitical structures. In the Arctic's case, this could include future impacts to the AC and NATO, and alliance shifts within the EU and Nordic Councils. Those entities seeking future cooperation with an independent Greenland, including the U.S. and China, should be well aware of Greenland's unique positions on regional politics, defense, and issues of economy versus environmental sustainability. In the following two sections, focus will be on how successfully China and the U.S.'s Arctic activities and policies have answered Greenland's unique independence concerns. Further study should be undertaken on EU, Western Nordic, other NATO states, and additional stakeholders' involvement on the island vis-a-vis Greenland's cultural mores.

Analysis of Chinese Inroads

Both IR theory camps discussed in the introduction's literature review tell portions of the greater Greenland engagement story. China does have strategic and commercial interests in mind on the island in line with the BRI, given Greenland's ideal position in relation to all three of the Arctic's identified shipping routes, especially the future Transpolar Route, and potential for new mineral and fossil fuel extraction access. According to the 2008 U.S. Geological Survey cited in the introduction, undiscovered oil reserves are estimated at 7.3 billion barrels and 52 trillion cubic feet of natural gas is believed to be extant in the region of western Greenland and eastern Canada.¹⁷¹ However, China is also keenly aware of remaining environmental, diplomatic, and social constraints. This has led senior Chinese government officials to advise SOEs to

¹⁷¹ Volpe, "The Tortuous Path of China's Win-Win Strategy in Greenland."

independently approach new ventures through established engagement methods and based on cautious appraisal of potential project's market benefits.¹⁷² Despite glacial melt and greater exposure of natural resources, Greenland still presents very arduous challenges. This translates to costly investments up front when initiating mining or infrastructure projects there, new types of extraction equipment with which Chinese companies are unfamiliar, and uncharted regulations.¹⁷³ The tenuous relationship between Denmark, the U.S., and Greenland does not help, and has led to China largely accepting a more cautionary approach as compared to its numerous projects in nearby Iceland and elsewhere in the Arctic region. To overcome some of these obstacles, China has once again turned towards bilateral deals and multilateral science diplomatic forums to assist with its engagement and to smooth over concerns on its intentions.

As of this writing, Chinese companies have either partnered with firms in the U.K. and Australia, or pursued unilateral projects to extract zinc at Citronen Fjord, copper at Wegener Halvø, iron at Isua, and rare earth elements (REE) at Kvanefjeld, Greenland. Additionally, China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) are eyeing the island's fossil fuel resources.¹⁷⁴ The Kvanefjeld REE project offers the greatest assessed value (\$1.4 billion), in addition to providing what China considers a highly strategic resource.¹⁷⁵ According to Andersson et al., other projects, such as Citronen Fjord are likely of interest primarily as

¹⁷² Christopher Weidacher Hsiung, "China and Arctic Energy: Drivers and Limitations," *The Polar Journal* 6, no. 2 (October 2016): 248, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2154896X.2016.1241486>.

¹⁷³ Hsiung, "China and Arctic Energy: Drivers and Limitations," 246.

¹⁷⁴ Foley, "The Politics of Economic Security," 99; Mingming Shi and Marc Lanteigne, "China's Central Role in Denmark's Arctic Security Policies," *The Diplomat*, December 8, 2019, <https://search-proquest-com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/docview/2322646262?accountid=11752>.

¹⁷⁵ Blaxekjaer, Lanteigne, and Shi, "The Polar Silk Road and the West Nordic Region," 9.

a means for regional access versus acquisition of the actual resource (Figure 4).¹⁷⁶

However, given Greenland's lack of infrastructure (including an inability to maintain highway or other transport systems through its challenging topography), its small population size, and global market fluctuations, mining on the island still poses a risk to investors.¹⁷⁷ Likely as a result, China and Greenland have begun opening up other markets (tourism, fur trade, and fisheries),¹⁷⁸ and looked for projects that address other mutual needs.

¹⁷⁶ Andersson, Zeuthen, and Kalvig, "Chinese Mining in Greenland," 1, 4.

¹⁷⁷ Wilson, "An Arctic 'Cold Rush?'" 513-514.

¹⁷⁸ Jacobsen and Gad, "Setting the Scene in Nuuk," 20.



Figure 4. Chinese mining investments on Greenland.¹⁷⁹

With Iceland as a regional development model,¹⁸⁰ Greenland considered Chinese firms for several of its critical infrastructure projects between 2016-2018, a decision that put its goals at odds with both Denmark and the U.S. strategic interests. As Gad et al. explain, Greenland continues to “cast China” as the most capable asset for gaining political independence through economic development.¹⁸¹ However, despite Greenland’s

¹⁷⁹ Andersson, Zeuthen, and Kalvig, “Chinese Mining in Greenland,” 3.

¹⁸⁰ Tonami, *Asian Foreign Policy*, 27.

¹⁸¹ Gad et al., “Imagining China on Greenland’s Road to Independence,” 2.

interest, evidence shows that it remains subject to the larger strategic maneuvers of its former colonizer and the U.S. In 2016, a potential deal between Hong Kong-based General Nice Group and Greenland to purchase a former Danish naval base at Grønnedal, located near the Isua iron mine, fell through after Denmark decided to withdraw its sale. This is believed to have occurred after prompt intervention by the U.S. given its security concerns over Chinese port access.¹⁸²

In 2017, Greenland and China began negotiating their most ambitious collaboration to date, the construction by China Communications Construction Company of three airports in Nuuk, Quaqortoq, and Illulissat. What ensued was a flurry of diplomatic activity between the U.S., Denmark, and Greenland, which abruptly halted the projects. Former U.S. Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis cautioned such a project would assist in China's "militarization" of the Arctic.¹⁸³ In what was seen as a clear appeasement of U.S. interests, Denmark countered the China Communications Construction Company with its own government-funded offer. China subsequently issued a statement on having a "one Denmark [diplomatic] policy," and the Chinese company dropped its own offer. Greenland's *Partii Naleraq*, which represents independence interests, responded by exiting Greenland's government.¹⁸⁴

In addition to mining and infrastructure projects, China has also approached some of Greenland's expressed social welfare needs, specifically in providing better access to education and improved exposure to regional scientific exchanges. CNARC's projects, described in more detail in Chapter 1, address several of Greenland's expressed

¹⁸² Andersson, Zeuthen, and Kalvig, "Chinese Mining in Greenland," 2; Sørensen, "China is in the Arctic to Stay as a Great Power," 9.

¹⁸³ Rasmussen, "The Desecuritization of Greenland's Security?" 7.

¹⁸⁴ Rasmussen, "The Desecuritization of Greenland's Security?" 8.

development and civil service goals. CNARC also serves China's interests in helping to navigate the complex domestic dynamics between Greenland and its former colonizer, a situation which China has previously attempted to avoid.¹⁸⁵ Representing one remaining source of interest overlap for Greenland and Denmark, the center has coordinated joint scientific expeditions between the two states.¹⁸⁶ CNARC also assists Denmark in subtly satisfying its own development goals, and keeping an amiable relationship with Greenland while monitoring Chinese interactions with its former colony.¹⁸⁷

Chinese science diplomacy with Greenland does not end with CNARC. In 2016, Greenland's Education, Culture, Research, and Church Ministry and China's State Oceanic Administration signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for a new scientific research station on the island. In keeping with its desire for furthering modern infrastructure and science, Greenland's Institute of Natural Resources and TeleGreenland and China's Beijing Normal University have also openly considered constructing a Nuuk-based satellite ground receiver.¹⁸⁸ U.S. and Danish reactions to these developments continue through the present, with the July 2020 meetings between U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen the most recent exchange on concerns of Chinese encroachment.¹⁸⁹ As detailed in Chapter 1, China has used scientific research station agreements throughout the Arctic to bridge its scientific and commercial interests, with stations typically preceding bilateral energy or

¹⁸⁵ Sørensen, "Chinese Investments in Greenland," 84.

¹⁸⁶ Ping and Mayer, "Science Diplomacy and Trust Building," 25.

¹⁸⁷ Sørensen, "China is in the Arctic to Stay as a Great Power," 10.

¹⁸⁸ Gad et al., "Imagining China on Greenland's Road to Independence," 12.

¹⁸⁹ "Pompeo Visits Denmark after Diplomatic Spat over Greenland," *Al Jazeera*, July 22, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/07/pompeo-visits-denmark-diplomatic-spat-greenland-200722072503141.html>.

infrastructure development deals. It is thus no coincidence that the Chinese-Greenland MOU occurred soon after the passage of the Large Scale Projects Act and in the midst of additional cooperative activities between the Geographical Survey of Denmark and Greenland and China's Academy of Geological Science.¹⁹⁰ Soon after the MOU, China began a Greenland tourism promotion campaign and established new mineral extraction plans.¹⁹¹ China and Greenland continued advancing education and cultural exchanges in 2018 during a meeting between Greenland's Minister for Independence, Foreign Affairs and Agriculture, and the Chinese Ambassador to Denmark.¹⁹² The MOUs address both Greenland's social and economic development goals.

It is notable that Greenland's 2016-2018 pursuit of educational cooperation with China coincided with renewed attempts by the Obama Administration to set up U.S.-led international scientific exchanges during its chairmanship of the AC.¹⁹³ This demonstrates Greenland's interest in new peripheral partnerships even when the U.S. signals cooperation outside of a military context: a potentially concerning development. Greenland's aforementioned desire to improve its higher educational system remains part of its development priorities, and it appears willing to satisfy those needs by partnering with states demonstrating consistent commitment to Arctic research.

China's pursuit of commercial development and cooperation in Arctic science-diplomacy forums has led to new partnerships and positive perceptions of its regional intent. Aki Tonami argues this is part of China's overall strategy of "incremental

¹⁹⁰ Sørensen, "Chinese Investments in Greenland," 86.

¹⁹¹ Sørensen, "Chinese Investments in Greenland," 84.

¹⁹² Sørensen, "China is in the Arctic to Stay as a Great Power," 6.

¹⁹³ Nilsson, "The United States and the Making of an Arctic Nation," 95, 102-103.

advancement,” that avoids controversy within new spheres of influence.¹⁹⁴ China views Nordic states as particularly amiable to its overtures, with Iceland considered most receptive to Chinese development given numerous established joint projects between the two countries.¹⁹⁵ As mentioned in the history section, China has also tracked Greenland’s independence movement closely. In light of various IR theories, China’s mixed staff of diplomatic and commercial representatives during official visits to the island is certainly open to analyst interpretation. However, given Greenland’s interests in economic development outside of Danish influence, the island will likely continue to be receptive to investment opportunities.

Diplomatic ties between Greenland and China provide wanted access for both states. For China, Greenland represents another Arctic state gained in its nascent regional sphere of influence outside of more exclusionary structures. Once the Northwest Passage, Northern Sea Route, and potentially the Transpolar Route open for longer seasonal periods, Greenland offers a deep water waypoint on the shorter shipping route between Asia and Europe.¹⁹⁶ For Greenland, ties with China offer advancement of its autonomous foreign policy. More importantly, following the SGA, China serves a potential high value customer for development of Greenland’s mining, infrastructure, and social development projects. The overall domestic reaction to continued U.S. and Danish intervention in Chinese development projects is yet unclear. However, given Greenland’s desire for greater autonomy, outside prevention of proposed projects without suitable alternative

¹⁹⁴ Tonami, *Asian Foreign Policy In a Changing Arctic*, 25-26.

¹⁹⁵ Tonami, *Asian Foreign Policy In a Changing Arctic*, 36.

¹⁹⁶ Blaxekjaer, Lanteigne, and Shi, “The Polar Silk Road and the West Nordic Region,” 1; Beixi, “Shipping Matters,” 1; Sørensen, “Chinese Investments in Greenland,” 88.

development solutions is likely to increase resentment towards the U.S. and its former colonizer.

Analysis of U.S. Inroads

Unlike China, the U.S. has a long, controversial history within Greenland. Inextricably linked to Denmark due to longstanding NATO partnership and military activities, U.S. intentions are likely to continue to promote skepticism. Several enduring elements of historical U.S. interaction with Greenland are particularly relevant to today's analysis of Greenland's independence narratives and questions of the U.S.'s future influence. From multiple attempts at purchasing the island, to present day DoD policies and an April 2020 \$12.1 million aid package,¹⁹⁷ the U.S. approach towards Greenland can easily be interpreted as self-serving, patronizing, or dismissive. U.S. official policy prioritizing state-to-state interaction with Denmark, and furtive attempts to undermine aforementioned development projects expressly desired by Greenlanders, do little to advance positive perceptions. Recognition of Greenland and its people remain primarily within the context of strategic perspectives, a militarized concept irreconcilable to Inuit pacifist cultural traditions.¹⁹⁸

Cold War-era nuclear weapons storage, strategic bomber basing, the displacement of native peoples at Thule, post-911 rendition flights, and Thule's 2014 cancellation of Greenland Contractors have all contributed to what Olesen calls a "healthy mistrust of

¹⁹⁷ "US Extends Economic Aid to Greenland to Counter China, Russia in Arctic," *U.S. News and World Report*, April 23, 2020, <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2020-04-23/us-economic-aid-to-greenland-draws-criticism-in-denmark>.

¹⁹⁸ Jacobsen and Gad, "Setting the Scene in Nuuk," 16; Rasmussen, "The Desecuritization of Greenland's Security?" 12.

U.S. interests.”¹⁹⁹ Despite this friction, contemporary U.S. military activities on Greenland do not rise to the level of what Nilsson calls a de facto U.S. military “colonization” of Greenland exhibited during the Cold War. During this era, Nilsson explains, the U.S. military imposed “direction, culture, and rules,” to all U.S. Arctic activities, including scientific research.²⁰⁰ An increasingly open Arctic, and expanding international interests, could also result in a return to some Cold War strategic footing on Greenland. Perhaps acting in the U.S.’s favor in terms of overall perception is Denmark’s continued role as the central object of Greenland’s criticism for any controversial occurrences on the island. This tends to absolve offending external parties like the U.S.²⁰¹ Independence from Denmark may change this dynamic. The U.S. would do well to study its past relationships with the island and critically examine Greenland’s independence goals.

As noted, individual policy preferences of U.S. presidential administrations has been the primary determiner of the nation’s general position toward the Arctic and Greenland.²⁰² U.S. policy inclusion of indigenous people has historically been driven by the scientific community, commercial development motivations, or from administrations that place significant value on furthering Arctic science agendas.²⁰³ From Greenland’s perspectives on political, security, and development, the U.S. has shown both promise

¹⁹⁹ Kristensen and Rahbek-Clemmensen, *Greenland and the International Politics of a Changing Arctic*, 5; Olesen, “Lightning Rod: U.S., Greenlandic and Danish Relations in the Shadow of Postcolonial Reputations,” 75-76.

²⁰⁰ Nilsson, “The United States and the Making of an Arctic Nation,” 97.

²⁰¹ Olesen, “Lightning Rod: U.S., Greenlandic and Danish Relations in the Shadow of Postcolonial Reputations,” 70-71, 80.

²⁰² Nilsson, “The United States and the Making of an Arctic Nation,” 95; Weingartner and Orttung, “U.S. Arctic Policymaking under Trump and Obama,” 1.

²⁰³ Nilsson, “The United States and the Making of an Arctic Nation,” 95, 101-103; Weingartner and Orttung, “U.S. Arctic Policymaking under Trump and Obama,” 1-2.

and irregularity. On political and strategic fronts, the U.S. seems to have evolved from a position of overtly opposing indigenous inclusion within the AC to embracing cooperation and shared concern for the region. Even before 1996, Arctic indigenous issues were occasionally raised in U.S. policy, although typically in the context of negotiating Alaskan development projects or when closely tied to U.S. scientific analysis. This is apparent in discussion surrounding the 1971 National Security Decision Memorandum 144, 1984 Arctic Research and Policy Act, and 1990 establishment of the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC).²⁰⁴ The 21st century movement towards directly engagement with Arctic indigenous peoples is observed in language included within the George W. Bush Administration's 2004 establishment of the Joint Committee and 2009 National and Homeland Security Directives.²⁰⁵

Collaboration with indigenous and other non-AC state entities was very apparent during the Obama Administration. Examples include the administration's attempts to establish the U.S.'s own science-based forums in the 2015 Global Leadership in the Arctic Cooperation, Innovation, Engagement, and Resilience (GLACIER) conference, which President Obama himself attended, and the 2016 Arctic Science Ministerial (ASM) meeting.²⁰⁶ The 2016 ASM notably included China among twenty-four other participants.²⁰⁷ The ASM, first envisioned in 2009 by the Bush Administration was orchestrated by two internal Arctic policy institutions that received substantial support

²⁰⁴ Nilsson, "The United States and the Making of an Arctic Nation," 98-99.

²⁰⁵ The White House, "NATIONAL SECURITY PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE/NSPD -- 66, HOMELAND SECURITY PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE/HSPD -- 25," January 9, 2009, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-66.pdf>.

²⁰⁶ Nilsson, "The United States and the Making of an Arctic Nation," 102; Weingartner and Orttung, "U.S. Arctic Policymaking under Trump and Obama," 4.

²⁰⁷ Weingartner and Orttung, "U.S. Arctic Policymaking under Trump and Obama," 4.

during the Obama era: the United States Arctic Research Commission (ARC) and the Arctic Executive Steering Committee (AESC). The latter was established by the Administration. In addition, the Obama Administration met regularly with the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). Finally, former Secretary of State Clinton's participation at the 2011 AC meeting, the first U.S. Secretary of State to do so, was widely lauded.²⁰⁸

While the Obama Administration did not emphasize strategic competition in the Arctic, it did create the 2013 U.S. National Strategy for the Arctic Region, which became the foundation for additional DoD and service-specific Arctic policies. Unlike traditional defense policy, this document placed a premium on diplomacy and the use of regional partnerships to enhance human and environmental security.²⁰⁹ Arctic security issues and cooperation with indigenous groups continued to be routinely added to policy documents, with residual Obama era-guidelines seen in the 2016 OSDP "Report to Congress on Strategy to Protect United States National Security Interests in the Arctic Region," and 2017 agreement on international scientific cooperation. The first focused on building or expanding regional partnerships like the Joint Arctic Command and Joint Rescue Coordination Center initiative between the U.S., Denmark, and Greenland.²¹⁰ The second aimed to promote scientific collaboration between AC member states, including provisions to expand multinational educational opportunities as well.²¹¹

²⁰⁸ Weingartner and Orttung, "U.S. Arctic Policymaking under Trump and Obama," 7.

²⁰⁹ Weingartner and Orttung, "U.S. Arctic Policymaking under Trump and Obama," 5.

²¹⁰ Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, "Report to Congress on Strategy to Protect United States National Security Interests in the Arctic Region," December 2016, 8, <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2016-Arctic-Strategy-UNCLAS-cleared-for-release.pdf>.

²¹¹ Weingartner and Orttung, "U.S. Arctic Policymaking under Trump and Obama," 7; "US Signs Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation," National Science Foundation, May

Trump Administration Greenland policies have taken shape under the combined leadership of former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, former Defense Secretary Mattis, and current Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. While elements of Obama-era internal institutions and emphasis on regional cooperation remained through the beginning of the Mattis and Tillerson period, current Administration trends cast Greenland and the Arctic in general as an arena for strategic competition with China and Russia, and a potential boon for the U.S.'s own resource extraction activities.²¹² These two themes are not necessarily at odds, exemplified but a 2017 \$43 billion liquefied natural gas (LNG) deal between Alaska and China.²¹³ While most of the Arctic institutions created or heavily supported by the Obama Administration remain, nearly all have either been circumvented in the policy making processes or have had sustained gaps in their leadership. This can be seen in the lack of an OSTP head until August 2018 and general lack of policy influence, removal of the State Department's U.S. Special Representative for the Arctic, and the freezing of AESC meetings within the National Security Council.²¹⁴

Current Arctic policy decisions, seen in the highly publicized August 2019 offer by President Trump to purchase Greenland, now appear to originate within a small circle of President Trump's trusted advisors. The purchasing offer as well as the increasingly hard stance towards Chinese Arctic activities expressed in updated 2019 DoD policies and by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo during the May 2019 AC ministerial meeting in

12, 2017,

https://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=241923#:~:text=May%2012%2C%202017,Ministerial%20Meeting%20in%20Fairbanks%2C%20Alaska.

²¹² Nilsson, "The United States and the Making of an Arctic Nation," 95.

²¹³ Conley, "The Implications of U.S. Policy Stagnation toward the Arctic Region."

²¹⁴ Weingartner and Orttung, "U.S. Arctic Policymaking under Trump and Obama," 4-5, 7.

Rovaniemi, Finland have surprised Arctic regional diplomats. This was particularly apparent when the AC failed to pass a culminating declaration following Pompeo's 2019 speech, and the U.S. delegation's rejection of mentioning climate change or sustainability themes in a joint AC statement.²¹⁵

As Nilsson posits, the Trump Administration's return to an Arctic priority committed to commercial development, is more consistent with the development rhetoric of many Greenlanders.²¹⁶ However, its chosen method for interceding in foreign developments in Greenland, via Denmark, continues to be unpopular among Greenlanders.²¹⁷ As already discussed on potential 2016-2018 Chinese infrastructure deals, quiet U.S. negotiations with Denmark to stop these projects were taken as another example of an untrustworthy and strategic-focused power that ignored Greenlanders' expressed goals for greater autonomy.

Time will tell whether the U.S.'s own recent overtures, included within a 2019 mineral exploitation MOU, expressed interest in constructing "dual-use" airports on the island, April 2020 aid package, and June 2020 opening of a U.S. consulate in Nuuk will tip the balance in favor of U.S. influence.²¹⁸ The U.S.'s 2020 aid package, tailored towards education and natural resource development, sparked political frustration in Denmark. However, it is a step towards the type and method of direct interaction modern

²¹⁵ Weingartner and Orttung, "U.S. Arctic Policymaking under Trump and Obama," 7.

²¹⁶ Nilsson, "The United States and the Making of an Arctic Nation," 104-105.

²¹⁷ Olesen, "Lightning Rod: U.S., Greenlandic and Danish Relations in the Shadow of Postcolonial Reputations," 72-76; Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, "Report to Congress Department of Defense Arctic Strategy," 1-3, 15.

²¹⁸ Rasmussen, "The Desecuritization of Greenland's Security?" 1; Blaxekjaer, Lanteigne, and Shi, "The Polar Silk Road and the West Nordic Region," 9.

Greenlanders value.²¹⁹ Greenlanders are sure to see the underlying strategic motivations in these U.S. counteroffers to potential Chinese deals. Namely, simultaneous U.S. desires to maintain free access to Thule, slow Chinese or Russian influence gain in the region, and retain Greenland territory within NATO control.²²⁰ However, given Greenland's prioritization of economic stimuli and political independence, the U.S. may find success despite its controversial history on the island. This would be better ensured if diplomatic gestures are constructed with cultural and political considerations in mind.

Conclusion

Greenland will very likely continue to serve as a window into greater regional, and international Arctic dynamics. The island's independence movement exemplifies many elements of changing geopolitical space. Historically a domestic and regional discussion, focused on indigenous liberation, Greenland's independence now involves significant interaction with external actors in the pursuit of economic independence. This chapter identified several important themes for guiding productive interaction with Greenland, following an examination of its modern history and social movements. Greenland's prioritization of economic development and civil service improvements, over defense-related or traditional environmental protection themes should be considered paramount in future diplomatic exchanges. Additionally, Greenland's desire to distance itself from Denmark's precedencies, demonstrates the importance of direct, culturally-aware interaction with Greenland's own government.

²¹⁹ *U.S. News and World Report*, "US Extends Economic Aid to Greenland."

²²⁰ Olesen, "Lightning Rod: U.S., Greenlandic and Danish Relations in the Shadow of Postcolonial Reputations," 73.

China's engagement with Greenland outside of traditional state boundaries, as well as its significant investment in Arctic bilateral development, has demonstrated to many Greenlanders the merits of future commercial partnership with the emerging Arctic power. The U.S., meanwhile, has a long and controversial history with Greenland, given its continued uninvited military presence and tendency to approach Greenland-related issues via Denmark. However, internal U.S. institutional changes enacted following the establishment of the AC, and accelerated from 2013 onward, demonstrate the promises of greater diplomatic flexibility. An emphasis on cooperation during the Obama Administration served to enhance state and non-state Arctic interaction. While the Trump Administration has bypassed many of these diplomatic institutions and downgraded science-related policy, its promotion of Arctic commercial development, and recent direct economic and civil service aid exchanges with the Nuuk government, do satisfy many of Greenland's immediate needs. While this chapter also explored other potential outside influencers of Greenland, additional study is recommended on the island's coordination with greater NATO states, Nordic Council, and the EU. The most advantageous international approach to Greenland would combine the promotion of non-traditional regional partnership forums with well-articulated development proposals. The latter closely mirroring Greenland's expressed needs. Additional time is required to adequately predict how external state and IO actions will affect influence in a future independent Greenland. However, success will likely come to the entity that consistently demonstrates alignment with an autonomous Greenland's cultural mores and socio-economic goals, and recognizes Greenland as an autonomous state for inclusion in regional orders.

Chapter 3: The Northern Sea Route: Heralding the Arrival of China as an Arctic Power

Introduction

Russia's Arctic coastline spans 24,140 kilometers, over half of the Arctic's littoral landmass. Climate change is eroding the region's ice-covered waterways for longer seasonal periods, opening access to navigable sea routes (predicted to be ice-free by the 2040s) and natural resources.²²¹ The former are comprised of the Northern Sea Route (NSR), spanning between the Bering Strait and the Novaya Zemlya archipelago, and the Northeast Passage (NEP), which continues the journey to Murmansk and the Barents Sea (Figure 5). During the late 16th century, Dutch and English explorers focused on bypassing the natural barrier of Novaya Zemlya, but due to impenetrable ice fields, it was not until the late 19th century that a successful transit to Asia occurred.²²² Novaya Zemlya still serves as the boundary for the two modern maritime transit routes; however, documents covering the geopolitical issues of Russia's high north frequently abbreviate both routes simply as the NSR.²²³ The combination is notable in itself given an anticipated increase in through-shipping between Northern Europe and Asia in the coming decades.

²²¹ Muyin Wang and James E. Overland, "A Sea Ice Free Summer Arctic within 30 Years?," *Geophysical Research Letters* 36, no. L07502 (April 2009): 1, doi:10.1029/2009GL037820; Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, "Report to Congress: Department of Defense Arctic Strategy"; Chief of Naval Operations, "The United States Navy Arctic Roadmap for 2014 to 2030."

²²² Dagomar Degroot, "Testing the Limits of Climate History: The Quest for a Northeast Passage during the Little Ice Age, 1594-1597," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 45, no. 4 (Spring 2015): 461, https://doi.org/10.1162/JINH_a_00755.

²²³ Farré, Albert B. et al., "Commercial Arctic Shipping through the Northeast Passage: Routes, Resources, Governance, Technology, and Infrastructure," *Polar Geography* 37, no. 4 (October 2014): 299, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1088937X.2014.965769>.

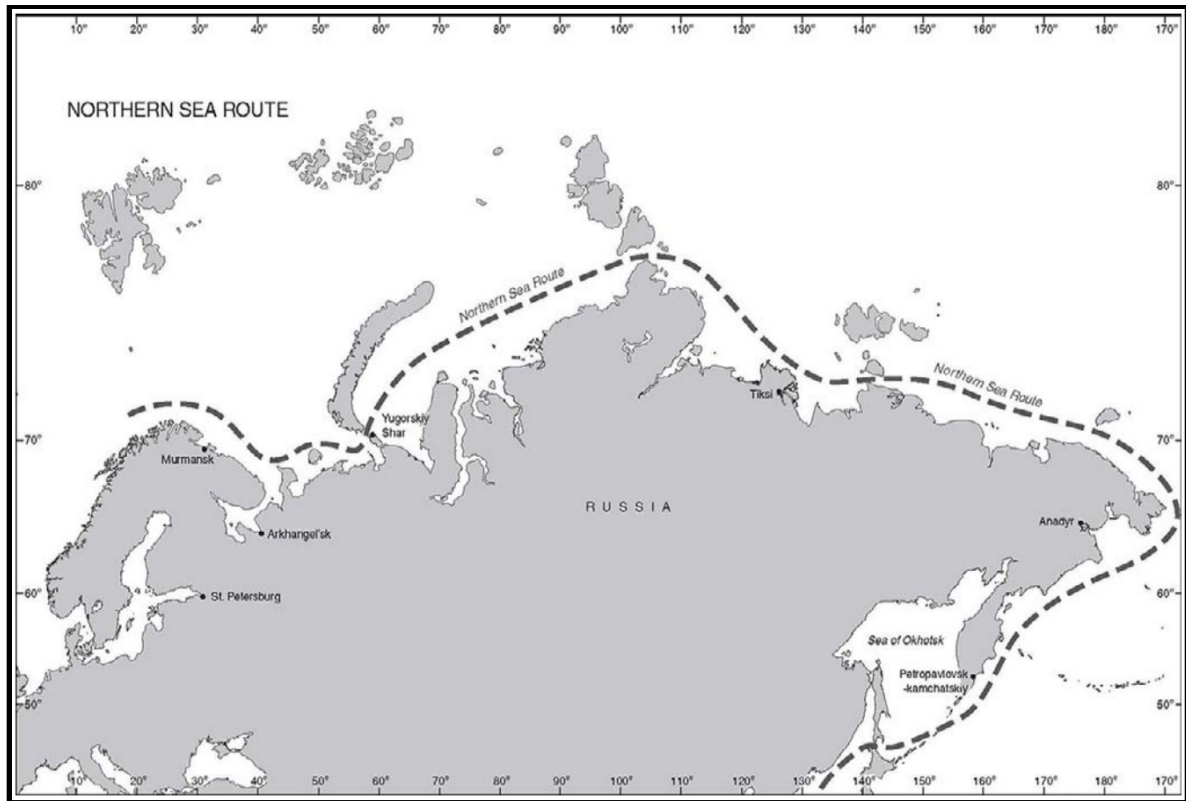


Figure 5. The Northern Sea Route spans across Russia's Arctic territory from the Bering Strait to the Barents Sea.²²⁴

Modern use of the NSR began during the Soviet era's industrial build-up of the Arctic, and following USSR's collapse, opened to the international community in 1991. Though the route's shipping traffic remains primarily domestic, international interest has expanded over the last two decades given the potential for shorter transit times between northern European and Asian ports. Distances between some city pairs could theoretically be reduced to 75% via an open NSR.²²⁵ As the world's largest merchant ship owning and building nation, China has taken notice of the NSR in line with its other Arctic

²²⁴ NGA, *Publication 183: Sailing Directions (Enroute) North Coast of Russia*, 7.

²²⁵ Farré et al., "Commercial Arctic Shipping through the Northeast Passage," 301; Sergey Sevastyanov and Aleksey Kravchuk, "Russia's Policy to Develop Trans-Arctic Shipping Along the Northern Sea Route," *Polar Journal* (August 2020): 4, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2154896X.2020.1799609>.

endeavors.²²⁶ In addition to possible logistic and strategic merits of the East-West shipping route, China is especially keen on gaining access to the NSR region's energy resources.

Russia's coast and adjoining sea areas, including the contested Lomonosov and Mendeleev ridges, are believed to hold 60% of the Arctic's untapped oil. Furthermore, an estimated 926 billion cubic meters of liquified natural gas (LNG) is deposited on the Yamal Peninsula, nestled just southeast of the scythe-like Novaya Zemlya archipelago.²²⁷ This peninsula is scene to Russia's premier Arctic development project, Yamal LNG (Figure 6).²²⁸ With climate change expanding the seasonal viability of the NSR and increasing international pressure to find cleaner energy sources, LNG supply lines to eastern Asia and northern Europe are anticipated to grow. Shipping from the Yamal LNG project will likely mirror seasonal accesses and human needs in the near future, with the summer season dedicated to powering Asia's air conditioning and winter —when eastern transits are more challenging— directed at Europe's heating requirements.²²⁹ However, climate change is expected to provide increasingly year around access to the site. The Yamal project's current investors include Russia's Novatek corporation (50.1% stake), France's Total (20%), Chinese National Petroleum Corporation (20%), and following 2014 sanctions imposed by the West in response to the annexation of Crimea, by China's Silk Road Fund (9.9%). Chinese banks also provided \$12 billion in loans to the project in

²²⁶ "e-Handbook of Statistics: Merchant Fleet," United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, last modified December 10, 2019, <https://stats.unctad.org/handbook/MaritimeTransport/MerchantFleet.html>.

²²⁷ "About the Project," Yamal LNG, accessed September 22, 2020, <http://yamallng.ru/en/>.

²²⁸ Jørgen Staun, "Russia's Strategy in the Arctic: Cooperation, not Confrontation," *Polar Record* 53, no. 270 (2017): 319, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247417000158>.

²²⁹ Bertelsen, "The GCC-Russia-China LNG Triangle," 486.

addition to the Silk Road Fund purchase. Once complete, Yamal LNG will provide 10% of the world's total LNG, and Russia has plans to expand its LNG production to five other Arctic sites.²³⁰ In June 2019, 'Novatek' and 'Gazprombank' established a partnership with China's 'Sinopec' to further open the Chinese energy market, the world's main LNG consumer.²³¹ China's stake in these and other Russian infrastructure projects are outwardly commercial, but given China's greater Arctic strategic ambitions, their involvement is worthy of more detailed study. Additionally, China's domestic incentive to move beyond more polluting sources of energy like coal is taking shape around new sources of importable energy, with a focus on LNG.²³²

²³⁰ Rafael Contreras Luna, "Russia, the Arctic and Northeast Asia: The Strategic Importance of the Far North," *Central European Journal of International & Security Studies* 13, no. 3 (September 2019): 112-114,

<http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/login.aspxdirect=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=tsh&AN=139654088&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

²³¹ Sevastyanov and Kravchuk, "Russia's Policy to Develop Trans-Arctic Shipping Along the Northern Sea Route," 15.

²³² Bertelsen, "The GCC-Russia-China LNG Triangle," 485-486.

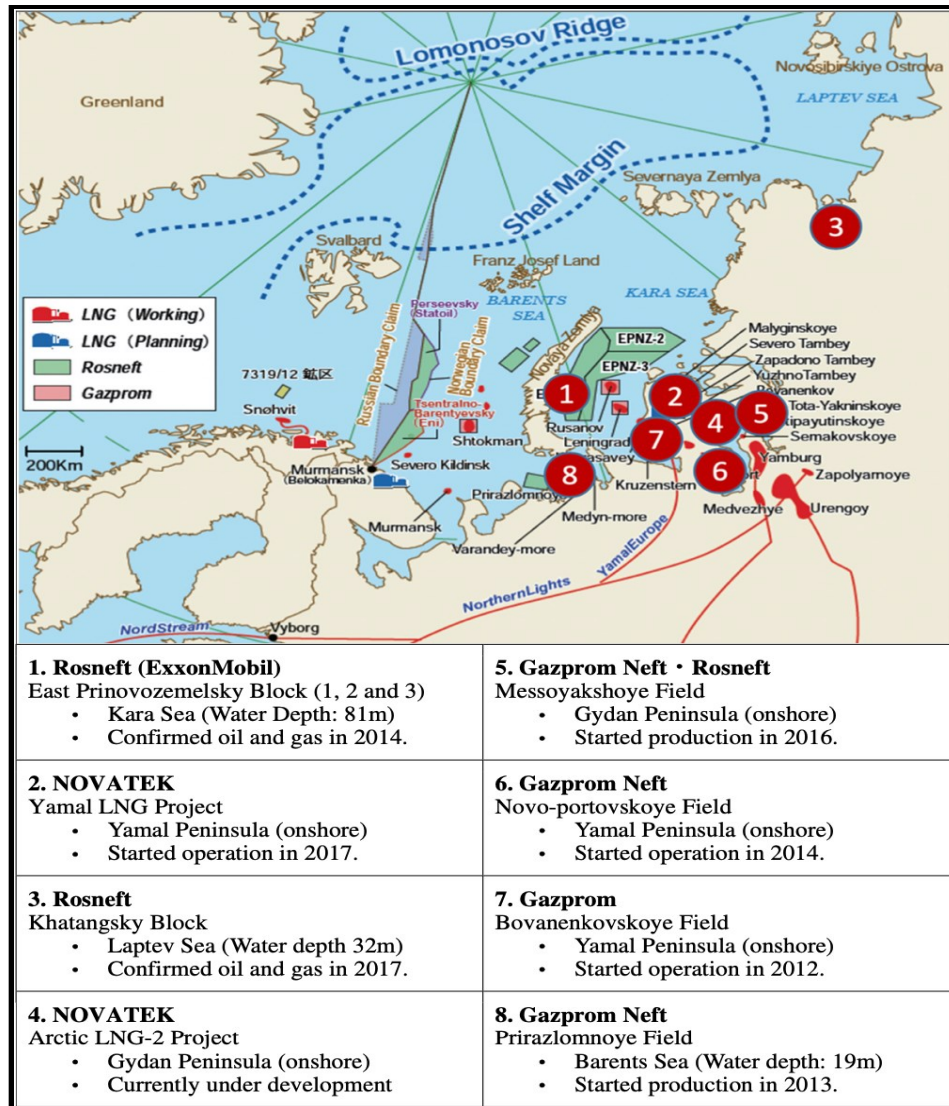


Figure 6. Yamal LNG facilities, including principle Russian and international companies.²³³

Thus far, this thesis has presented China’s evolution as a “Near Arctic State” through examination of the Arctic’s existing governance structures and case studies. In the process, several themes have emerged, which are again reflected in the NSR’s geopolitical environment. These include theories that exclusive state practices lead to less controllable, peripheral results; the changing definition of Arctic governance from one of

²³³ Daisuke Harada, “Behind the Recent Acceleration of the Arctic Oil and Gas Development in Russia: Potential, Ongoing Projects and Challenges,” *Polar Record* (January 2020): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247420000091>.

littoral sovereignty to a knowledge and commercial-based structure; commentary on China's norm-engineering of a "peaceful rise;" and the important role political anthropology plays in Arctic affairs. The NSR is unlike Greenland, where China has thus far avoided direct state-to-state confrontation with established Arctic powers, while opportunistically promoting infrastructure and mining projects, tailored to the island's independence movement. It is also not quite analogous to China's Nordic partnerships, particularly in Iceland and Norway, where China has developed key infrastructure and promoted science-diplomacy forums external to the AC. Instead, the NSR represents a complicated, yet progressing relationship between two major powers, Russia and China, derived from shared concerns over Western power imbalance, desires for technology and energy exchange, and joint-understanding of changing global needs. It is a culturally symbolic region, particularly for Russia, providing the context and impetus for a significant amount of its domestic and foreign policy agendas. Since 2014, Russia has increasingly looked to its evolving cooperation with China, as well as other Asian states, to achieve many of its regional goals.²³⁴ China, also looking to strategically court Russia, has risen to the occasion, incorporating its BRI policy into equivalent Russian national programs. In addition, it has grown scientific-commercial forums, participated in military exercises, improved technology and information exchanges, demonstrated infrastructure building prowess, promoted the promises of NSR shipping and energy, and begun to pursue cooperative stakes within potentially evolving international legal definitions. Each of these avenues represent movement towards achievement of a legitimate stake in Arctic governance. Taken collectively, China cannot be regarded as simply a national or

²³⁴ Mariia Kobzeva, "Strategic Partnership Setting for Sino-Russian Cooperation in Arctic Shipping," *The Polar Journal* (August 2020): 5, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2154896X.2020.1810956>.

regional investor, but rather as an agent of a changing peripheral governance paradigm. This extends beyond Sino-Russian or even Arctic regional affairs, but towards larger concepts of global governance as well, as discussed in a 2017 article by Xu Hong of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in which he expounds on the “global-regional-national” nature of Chinese Arctic engagement.²³⁵ This chapter argues it is in the NSR region where China has truly arrived as an Arctic power, and where its Arctic motivations will also increasingly interact with larger geopolitical movements.

We will first examine the recent wealth of literature on Sino-Russian cooperation in the NSR. From this background, we transition into a study of political anthropology, the cultural and historically based context guiding both states’ contemporary activities. Much of China’s motivations for Arctic expansion have been explored in Chapters 1 and 2, but this section seeks to explain its particular incentive for establishing a foothold in the NSR and compares these to Russia’s own motivations. Russia’s political anthropology, untouched in earlier portions of the thesis, will be covered in more detail. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to a cataloguing of the Sino-Russian NSR relationship, organized from the strategic to a more operational perspective. In addition to illustrating the significance of the NSR to China’s greater Arctic ambitions, this section furthers theories on the methods for peripheral governance in relation to exclusion and norm entrepreneurship. The chapter ends with an analogy to the 19th century British “World System,”²³⁶ where the realities of maritime-driven economic power were much more complicated than the common perception of “British Empire” implies. Though not

²³⁵ Jian, “Four Impacts from the China-Nordic Arctic Research Center,” 294-295.

²³⁶ John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1.

a perfect reflection of the contemporary NSR dynamic, an examination of 19th century Chinese treaty ports reflect similarities and furthers political anthropological context.

Existing literature on NSR development commonly falls into one of four categories: how the NSR fits into larger theories on Arctic cooperative and strategic policy, the cultural and political perspectives of Russian and China on NSR region expansion, legal interpretations on the region's jurisdiction, and sector-specific analyses driven by the shipping community. A large portion of recent scholarship published through accredited polar-specific academic journals enjoy funding from Russian or Chinese universities. This does not refute these articles' findings, and serves to again highlight the synthesis of each states' official policy and academia; however, it is still noteworthy.

Overviews of Arctic cooperation and strategic competition assist in placing the NSR within larger Arctic themes. Of these, Michael Byers and Jørgen Staun offer the best commentary on liberal IR theory towards Arctic governance. Byers' assertion that the polar regions as well as space create human environments of "complex and resilient interdependence" can certainly be argued in the NSR context, given Russia's growing embrace of foreign partners to overcome regional challenges.²³⁷ While Staun ultimately takes a more pessimistic view than Byers on the enduring strength of Arctic cooperative behavior, he too posits that a combination of institutionalized liberalism within Russia's Arctic-focused diplomatic bureaucracy and commercial interests close to the Kremlin will likely continue to overcome its more realist forces.²³⁸ Like Staun, Mariia Kobzeva

²³⁷ Byers, "Cold, Dark, and Dangerous: International Cooperation in the Arctic and Space," 32.

²³⁸ Jørgen Staun, "A Two-Faced Russia? Civilian Interests and Great Power Politics in the High North," in *Handbook on Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic. Frontiers in International Relations*, ed. J. Weber

uses a defensive neorealist approach, arguing that despite deeper, cultural unease with its budding Chinese relationship, both nations stand to gain by furthering the Arctic's status quo of cooperative behavior.²³⁹ Kobzeva combines Staun and Byers's points on the potential threats posed to this order, indicating U.S. militarism could further strengthen Sino-Russian security partnership into a "NSR club."²⁴⁰ This latter point will be covered shortly and is supported by increasing military engagement between the two states. Anchoring her arguments on the classic seapower theories of Alfred Thayer Mahan, Margaret Blunden rounds out the current regional strategic analyses of Byers, Staun, and Kobzeva, adding predictive scenarios on Arctic state alignments. Quoting China's Dalian Maritime University's Li Zhenfu in his statement, "whoever has control over the Arctic route will control the new passage of world economics and international strategies," Blunden introduces the possibility of a "Northern Pearls" commercial-military buildup akin to China's Indian Ocean expansion.²⁴¹

Supporting this thesis's sub-theme on the close association between culture and national policy are several scholars who remark on the NSR's significance to each state. Bertelsen and Gallucci, Daria Gritsenko, and Rafael Luna illustrate the historic political significance of Russian Arctic development and compare its emotional motivations to China's more rational, global ambitions.²⁴² From this foundation, scholarship follows two

(Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2020), 3, https://doi-org.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/10.1007/978-3-030-45005-2_1; Staun, "Russia's Strategy in the Arctic," 314-315, 328.

²³⁹ Kobzeva, "Strategic Partnership Setting for Sino-Russian Cooperation in Arctic Shipping," 1, 3.

²⁴⁰ Kobzeva, "Strategic Partnership Setting for Sino-Russian Cooperation in Arctic Shipping," 10-11, 13.

²⁴¹ Margaret Blunden, "Geopolitics and the Northern Sea Route," *International Affairs* 88, no.1 (January 2012): 117-118, 127, 129, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2012.01060.x>.

²⁴² Rasmus Gjedssø Bertelsen and Vincent Gallucci, "The Return of China, Post-Cold War Russia, and the Arctic: Changes on Land and at Sea," *Marine Policy* 72 (May 2016): 241-243, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2016.04.034>; Daria Gritsenko, "Vodka on Ice? Unveiling Russian Media

paths: one predicting ever greater Sino-Russian cooperative structures and another that highlights potential rifts in the relationship, which could erode their future ties.²⁴³

Ongoing NSR development has also led to significant legal examination of the waterway's proper jurisdiction amidst Sino-Russo collaboration. This is particularly significant to our theme of exclusive versus inclusive state and regional behavior, as international laws inherently introduces a global dynamic to what are otherwise areas of nation-state control and deliberation. On one side of the legal divide are those petitioning Russia to follow an internationalized interpretation on freedom of navigation through the NSR, supported by UNCLOS.²⁴⁴ On the other side, are arguments supporting Russia's preferred nationalized approach.²⁴⁵ A final group explore China's larger global strategy at play in tacit acceptance of unilateral Russian governance, both to support its own claims in the East and South China Seas and assist in unhindered Arctic resource access.²⁴⁶

The final category of interest in NSR development comes from what Yiru Zhang, Qiang Meng, and Liye Zhang call an already "well-rounded" amount of literature on the

Perceptions of the Arctic," *Energy Research & Social Science* 16 (March 2016): 11, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2016.03.012>.

²⁴³ Luna, "Russia, the Arctic and Northeast Asia," 101-103, 108; Staun, "Russia's Strategy in the Arctic," 328; Christopher R. Rossi, "The Club Within the Club: the Challenge of a Soft Law Framework in a Global Arctic Context," *The Polar Journal* 5, no. 1 (June, 2015): 9, 11, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2154896X.2015.1025490>; Tianming Gao and Vasilii Erokhin, "China-Russia Collaboration in Arctic Shipping and Maritime Engineering," *The Polar Journal* (August 2020): 4-6, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2154896X.2020.1799612>.

²⁴⁴ Alexander Sergunin and Gunhild Hoogensen Gjørsv, "The Politics of Russian Arctic Shipping: Evolving Security and Geopolitical Factors," *The Polar Journal* (September 2020): 5, 10, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2154896X.2020.1799613>.

²⁴⁵ Viatcheslav Gavrilov, "Russian Legislation on the Northern Sea Route Navigation: Scope and Trends," *Polar Journal* (August, 2020): 6, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2154896X.2020.1801032>.

²⁴⁶ Jingchao Peng and Njord Wegge, "China and the Law of the Sea: Implications for Arctic Governance," *The Polar Journal* 4, No 2 (2014): 294-295, 300, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2154896X.2014.954887>; Andrea Beck, "China's Strategy in the Arctic: a Case of Lawfare?" *The Polar Journal* 4, no. 2 (November 2014): 306, 311, 313, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2154896X.2014.954886>.

NSR's shipping feasibility.²⁴⁷ Cumulatively, these studies combine discussion comparing NSR shipping time and costs with established southern ocean routes, and the physical, logistical, infrastructure and legal challenges posed to companies attempting to operate in the high north.²⁴⁸ Others comment on the adverse impacts of Crimea sanctions to the number of vessels annually transiting the NSR and offer suggestions for improving its productivity.²⁴⁹ Finally, Sergey Sevastyanov and Aleksey Kravchuk provide a bridge back to Byers's argument on "complex interdependence," stating Arctic shipping represents one of the most tangible aspects of this ongoing regional cooperative behavior.²⁵⁰

Overall, literature on Sino-Russian activity in the NSR is robust and covers a variety of assessments expected for a developing region of international influence. Though a majority of these previous works already compare Russia and China's motivations for the NSR, this thesis argues few existing studies take a more holistic approach towards assessing China's greater advancement of its "Near Arctic" statehood. That is, examining all of China's recent forays into Arctic influence to determine where it has most closely achieved its expressed policy goals. This chapter specifically argues NSR development represents the first clear indication China has arrived as a permanent Arctic presence in line with its overarching regional strategy. While still "advancing

²⁴⁷ Yiru Zhang, Qiang Meng, and Liye Zhang, "Is the Northern Sea Route Attractive to Shipping Companies? Some Insights from Recent Ship Traffic Data," *Marine Policy* 73 (August 2016): 53, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2016.07.0300308-597X/>.

²⁴⁸ Farré, et al., "Commercial Arctic Shipping through the Northeast Passage," 299-300; Zhang, Meng, and Zhang, "Is the Northern Sea Route Attractive to Shipping Companies?" 54-55, 59.

²⁴⁹ Harada, "Behind the Recent Acceleration of the Arctic Oil and Gas Development in Russia," 2, 4; Sevastyanov and Kravchuk, "Russia's Policy to Develop Trans-Arctic Shipping Along the Northern Sea Route," 2.

²⁵⁰ Sevastyanov and Kravchuk, "Russia's Policy to Develop Trans-Arctic Shipping Along the Northern Sea Route," 16.

incrementally”²⁵¹ and peacefully, it is in the NSR that China has gained acceptance as a necessary asset for large-scale and collaborative Arctic enterprise. As a result, it has established multiple avenues for attaining a major role in Arctic governance outside the framework of existing IOs. This chapter also builds on a political anthropology approach to addressing respective Russian and Chinese state actions. Finally, while Blunden bolsters her argument with Mahanian seapower theory, few other Arctic scholars support their arguments with historical case studies on rising maritime economies. This chapter offers a unique comparison to aspects of the 19th century British “World System,”²⁵² drawing an analogy between Great Britain’s coastal Chinese treaty ports and China’s own contemporary BRI interests for the NSR.

Political Anthropology: Origins of Russian and Chinese Motivation for NSR Development

Russian and Chinese motivations for expanding the NSR are built on respective political anthropology. In this context, the definition of political anthropology is well represented by Donald Kurtz’s theory of an “orientation” to formal state actions through acceptance that “the government of a political community might exist in other nonpolitical institutions.”²⁵³ In other words, state actions are governed by their societies’ symbolic interpretations, history, and diverse interests that nonetheless serve to guide political policy. This section seeks to first demonstrate the cultural and historical context for Russia and China’s contemporary interaction. From this foundation, the intention is for the reader to better appreciate the significant deviation from Russian cultural

²⁵¹ Tonami, *Asian Foreign Policy In a Changing Arctic*, 25-26.

²⁵² Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 1.

²⁵³ Donald V. Kurtz, *Political Anthropology: Power and Paradigms* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001), 2-3.

precedence occurring in the far north and to establish a new perspective on the underlying reasons behind related geopolitical events. Russia and China's evolving partnership comes about despite rifts in respective ideology towards the Arctic. How this cooperative enterprise has emerged, and how each party views the relationship's desired outcomes, illustrates just how far China has come in achieving formal recognition as an Arctic power. Underlying differences may also assist in predicting future interaction.

Modern Russian Arctic re-development policies are closely tied to achievement of *velikoderzhavnost*, the state of being a great power.²⁵⁴ Similarly to the West's connection between historic Arctic exploration and modern territorial sovereignty,²⁵⁵ and China's attempts to do the same in its 2018 Arctic Policy, Russia's Arctic conscience has its roots in 18th and 19th century expeditions and settlement.²⁵⁶ Russia's contemporary NSR revitalization efforts, and desired return to world hegemony, are directly linked to the Arctic's perceived role in sustaining the Soviet Union's industrial might. During the height of the Soviet-era, Russia developed a string of northern, largely isolated industrial cities, linked together by the NSR. From a maritime perspective, this created a robust domestic transport system that reached 6.58 million tons and over 1,300 vessel transits in 1987, before rapidly falling with the demise of the Soviet Union.²⁵⁷ In addition to the practical significance of state-revenue generated by this volume of shipping and raw production, the Soviet Arctic came to represent a symbol of national pride in overcoming the challenges of nature, and was considered a space where "true socialism" could

²⁵⁴ Luna, "Russia, the Arctic and Northeast Asia," 102.

²⁵⁵ Dodds and Nuttall, *The Scramble for the Poles*, 11.

²⁵⁶ Luna, "Russia, the Arctic and Northeast Asia," 105.

²⁵⁷ Farré et al., "Commercial Arctic Shipping through the Northeast Passage," 302.

flourish.²⁵⁸ In contrast, the post-Soviet demise of many of these once vibrant Arctic cities became a source of national shame, and a stirring symbol for the need to revive the region.

From an existential perspective, development of Russia's far-reaching and lucrative territories also meets what Bertelsen and Gallucci describe as Russia's "geostrategic instinct..to maximize imperial space."²⁵⁹ This concept is tied in closely with the Sino-Russo relationship's irony: Russia's long desire for territorial exclusivity based on a distrust of outsiders and use of strategic resources by Russian central government-led industry.²⁶⁰ Russia's border lands have historically posed its greatest external threat, creating an anxiety mitigated by the establishment of control over "time and space."²⁶¹ Providing for large sacrifices of territory during invasion ultimately granted Russia salvation, exemplified by Napoleon's ill-fated Grande Armée and Hitler's 1941 *Operation Barbarossa*. Given these pyrrhic victories, Western advance still weighs heavily in Russia's modern strategy as it views what it considers as U.S. and NATO encroachment. On its Pacific flank, Russia suffered a devastating loss in the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese war, multinational (including Chinese) Siberian occupation during its 1917 civil war, the 1929 Sino-Soviet War over railroad infrastructure, and further border conflicts with China reaching into the 1960s. These events also set a baseline for mistrust of Asian power imbalance.²⁶²

²⁵⁸ Luna, "Russia, the Arctic and Northeast Asia," 107; Staun, "Russia's Strategy in the Arctic," 321-322.

²⁵⁹ Bertelsen and Gallucci, "The Return of China, Post-Cold War Russia, and the Arctic," 242-243.

²⁶⁰ Bertelsen and Gallucci, "The Return of China, Post-Cold War Russia, and the Arctic," 243.

²⁶¹ Bertelsen and Gallucci, "The Return of China, Post-Cold War Russia, and the Arctic," 242.

²⁶² Michael M. Walker, *The 1929 Sino-Soviet War: The War Nobody Knew* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2016), 1-2.

Russia's historical and cultural perspectives coalesce in its contemporary Arctic policies and official rhetoric. Across the Russian political, academic, defense, and public spheres is a predominant desire to be considered a great power, facilitated by its Arctic territory's energy and logistical resources.²⁶³ However, Russia's actual approach to obtaining a viable NSR region demonstrates competing internal ideologies. This dichotomy can even be observed in the rhetoric of Russian leaders, with President Putin's 2010 call for cooperation, "If you stand alone, you can't survive in the Arctic. Nature makes people and states to help each other," on one hand, and the more romanticized, nationalist statement of former Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, "The Arctic is a Russian Mecca."²⁶⁴ President Putin presides over the policy realization of both versions, or what Staun refers to in IR theory as a liberal and realist "discourse" and Sergunin and Gjorv as "soft" and "hard" approaches to Arctic policy.²⁶⁵ The former are primarily composed of advocates of commerce and scientific advancement and the latter of Russia security-minded proponents. Staun goes as far as to offer a qualitative list of common Russian Arctic parlance, with words like 'conquest', 'exploring', 'Russia's greatness', 'revival' and 'sovereignty' arising from Russia's realist camp and 'joint-venture', 'public-private partnerships', 'cooperation' and 'productive cooperation' appearing from its liberal-minded demographic.²⁶⁶ Russia's two philosophical camps are also observed in

²⁶³ Staun, "A Two-Faced Russia?" 4; Luna, "Russia, the Arctic and Northeast Asia," 102.

²⁶⁴ Byers, "Cold, Dark, and Dangerous: International Cooperation in the Arctic and Space," 36; Luna, "Russia, the Arctic and Northeast Asia," 108, 124.

²⁶⁵ Staun, "Russia's Strategy in the Arctic," 315, 328; Sergunin and Gjorv, "The Politics of Russian Arctic Shipping," 6, 13.

²⁶⁶ Staun, "Russia's Strategy in the Arctic," 315.

its decision to annex Crimea in 2014, its 2007 flag planting on the seafloor of the North Pole, yet its display of cooperation within multilateral Arctic forums.²⁶⁷

For China, a climate-altered Arctic represents important new spheres of influence, energy and trade markets, Arctic development experience, and international status fulfillment. However, the degree of dependency placed on this single region to fulfill larger societal objectives is arguably much lower than in Russia. On the historical front, China has a shorter Arctic presence, though it still sought to document its past participation in early Arctic treaties and recent scientific expeditions in its 2018 Arctic Policy.²⁶⁸ The Arctic therefore lacks the emotive pull inspired by Soviet-era propaganda, or contemporary political references to a once gloried northern past. China instead frames its Arctic and NSR-regional development motivations on more logic-based criteria, where its Arctic progress is considered just one of numerous avenues in fulfilling larger global ambitions.²⁶⁹ One of its main catalysts for global expansion, including to the NSR region, is a requirement for continued access to diverse energy sources. Energy access fulfills not only essential consumer and industry needs, but also comes with pressure to satisfy domestic desire for cleaner fuels, stemming from the widely acknowledged negative consequences of China's rapid economic rise built heavily upon coal use.²⁷⁰ In at least one respect, it shares a security-minded perspective with Russia. As a nation that has defined its economic rise by virtue of international shipping and whose continued growth is dependent on persistent access to global energy sources, its "border" concerns

²⁶⁷ Staun, "Russia's Strategy in the Arctic," 315.

²⁶⁸ People's Republic of China State Council Information Office, "China's Arctic Policy."

²⁶⁹ Bertelsen and Gallucci, "The Return of China, Post-Cold War Russia, and the Arctic," 241.

²⁷⁰ Bertelsen, "The GCC-Russia-China LNG Triangle," 485-486.

are devoted to the maintenance of strategic sea lanes of communication, especially through the East-West maritime chokepoints of the Malacca Strait and Suez Canal.²⁷¹ The NSR offers another, potentially faster East-West corridor for energy supply should the security of existing passages be compromised.

Those more cynical of China's overall global intentions describe its Arctic activities as yet another example of its modern application of 反客为主 (to make the host and the guest exchange roles), an ancient proverb reflecting this thesis's exclusion-peripheralization theory and its earlier discussion of the arguments of realists scholars like Anne-Marie Brady, Mia Bennett, and Camilia Sorenson.²⁷² For example, in her book *China as a Polar Great Power*, Brady describes a 2009-era legacy version of China's eventual 2018 Arctic Policy, published by the China Oceanic Administration for a Chinese audience, in which the organization's deputy director detailed a three-step plan to obtain Arctic influence. This included a gradual rise via a science-diplomatic angle to a position in "hard power" Arctic governance, which Brady claims is already occurring.²⁷³ In the context of the Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic, concern over China's deeper or more nuanced intentions frequently arises. As will be discussed shortly, despite growing security ties, Russia is still wary of oversharing territory, strategic infrastructure, and information as well as China's potential designs on dual-use technology.²⁷⁴ Others

²⁷¹ Sevastyanov and Kravchuk, "Russia's Policy to Develop Trans-Arctic Shipping Along the Northern Sea Route," 14; Farré et al., "Commercial Arctic Shipping through the Northeast Passage," 302.

²⁷² Jonathan Hall, "Arctic Enterprise: The China Dream Goes North," *Journal of Political Risk* 7, no. 9 (September 2019), <https://www.jpolrisk.com/arctic-enterprise-the-china-dream-goes-north/>; Brady, *China as a Polar Great Power*, 5-6; Sørensen, "China is in the Arctic to Stay," 5-7; Bennett, "At the Arctic Circle Forum."

²⁷³ Brady, *China As a Polar Great Power*, 221.

²⁷⁴ Kobzeva, "Strategic Partnership Setting for Sino-Russian Cooperation in Arctic Shipping," 10.

point to China's potential manipulation of the International Maritime Organization (IMO)'s Polar Code, or the use of remote sensing capabilities to influence UNCLOS provisions that might reverse the "guest-owner" dynamic. Despite these potential political anthropological challenges, the remaining sections of this chapter will provide evidence to the growing realization of China's Arctic, and perhaps more global goals, via the NSR.

The NSR and China's Arctic Arrival

Given Russia's exclusive national character and the cultural significance it places on the NSR region, its embrace of China (as well as other rising Asian powers and Norway) as investors, maritime security partners, science advisors, and infrastructure developers demonstrates just how far Arctic power dynamics have shifted. Joint NSR re-development projects, while not replete of obstacles, offer China its largest and most lucrative Arctic foothold to date, positioning it to affect change in Eurasian and Arctic governance. This new norm of Chinese Arctic competence, constructed outside traditional regional organizations, is the result of focused years-long efforts placed on bilateral resume building. Admittedly, Russia's "Asian pivot"²⁷⁵ was further catalyzed by a desperate need for financial assistance following Western sanctions imposed after the annexation of Crimea. However, China's status as its preferred partner is at least two decades in the making, arising from mutually desired resistance to perceived U.S. power imbalance, energy and technology trade, and tacit acceptance of respective domestic policies long criticized by the West.²⁷⁶ This section catalogues each of these efforts and

²⁷⁵ Gao and Erokhin, "China-Russia Collaboration in Arctic Shipping and Maritime Engineering," 6.

²⁷⁶ Evan S. Medeiros and Michael S. Chase, "Chinese Perspectives on the Sino-Russian Relationship," in *Russia-China Relations Assessing Common Ground and Strategic Fault Lines*, National Bureau of Asian

opportunities, emphasizing it is in the NSR region where China has already realized its Arctic goals.

Recent strategic-level agreements between Russia and China have synchronized each nation's principle expansion programs, linking the Eurasian Economic Union, China's BRI, and several NSR development projects. The combination of these efforts provide an unprecedented Arctic gateway for China, while simultaneously satisfying Russia's investment needs. In July 2017, Presidents Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin signed the *China-Russia Joint Declaration on Further Strengthening Comprehensive, Strategic and Cooperative Partnership*.²⁷⁷ This pact was expanded in June 2019 with the *Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on the Development of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership for Collaboration in the New Era*. Both documents detail Sino-Russian plans to co-develop the Arctic.²⁷⁸ The 2019 *Joint Statement* describes each states' intention, "to promote Sino-Russian cooperation in the sustainable development of the Arctic, expand the development and use of Arctic waterways and cooperation in the areas of infrastructure, resource development, tourism, ecology and environmental protection in the Arctic region on the basis of the rights and interests of coastal States. Support the continuation of polar scientific cooperation and promote the implementation of joint Arctic scientific research cruises and joint Arctic

Research Special Report #66 (July, 2017), 2, 4, https://carnegieendowment.org/files/SR66_Russia-ChinaRelations_July2017.pdf; Eugene B. Rumer, "Russia's China Policy: This Bear Hug is Real," in *Russia-China Relations Assessing Common Ground and Strategic Fault Lines*, 18.

²⁷⁷ "Press Statements Following Russian-Chinese Talks," The Kremlin, July 4, 2017, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54979>.

²⁷⁸ Sevastyanov and Kravchuk, "Russia's Policy to Develop Trans-Arctic Shipping Along the Northern Sea Route," 14-15.

research projects. Continuation[sic] of Russian-Chinese cooperation in the International Arctic Forum “Arctic-Dialogue Region.”²⁷⁹

The 2019 statement is significant to Chinese Arctic expansion in several respects. First, it represents a major achievement in integrating its own external goals into Russia’s through commerce-focused common policies.²⁸⁰ Second, it displays two traditional Arctic ideologies in which China benefits: regional cooperation and exploitation. While ecology and environment are mentioned, a science premise is frequently applied to Arctic matters involving commercial development. Lobbying for “infrastructure, resource development, [and] tourism” falls within Chinese policy recommendations for gaining access to future governance systems.²⁸¹ The statement’s notable mention of the rights of coastal states highlights China’s consistent public acknowledgment for its respect of regional sovereignty and its simultaneous methods for gaining influence outside of those traditional boundaries. Third, while this statement subtly reflects the Russian anthropological fear of outside territorial incursion, it appears designed to mitigate — likely domestic concerns— by listing the multiple advantages of foreign cooperation. Finally, China’s participation in the Territory of Dialogue, International Arctic Forum is perhaps the most visible example of the close association between Chinese and Russian industry interests and national policies. The Russian government website for its 6th annual gathering, planned for 2021 in St Petersburg, combines these motivations on its home page. Industry partners are prominently listed (Gazprom, Novatek, Nornickel, and

²⁷⁹ “Joint Statement of the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation on the Development of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership for Collaboration in the New Era (full text),” *Xinhua*, June 6, 2019, <https://www.bilaterals.org/?joint-statement-of-the-people-s>.

²⁸⁰ Brady, *China As a Polar Great Power*, 227.

²⁸¹ Brady, *China As a Polar Great Power*, 227.

Rosatom). A stylish Arctic visual features the promises of hydrocarbon, acknowledgment of the region's diverse array of flora and fauna, and depicts numerous environmental research stations. The page also features a cameo of President Vladimir Putin next to a statement in which he implores that the forum, "unite[s] expert and research communities...politicians and businesspeople from different countries – those who...are involved in the important work of promoting the harmonious development of the Arctic and the preservation of its unique nature and the distinctive cultural traditions of the local peoples."²⁸² Of note, China sent the second largest number of delegates to the Dialogue's 2019 conference, just behind Norway in an international field that included representatives from 52 nations.²⁸³ While Chapter 1's discussion of epistemic communities focused primarily on growing importance of scientific knowledge networks, according to Rasmus Bertelsen, the cooperation between commercial and scientific stakeholders with these forums also represent similar communities of action and behavioral "diffusion." Such multi-disciplinary interactions impart parties with understanding of both their sector's motives and their representative roles for respective state policies.²⁸⁴

Sino-Russian maritime security cooperation has also grown significantly over the last two decades and is anticipated to soon reach the Arctic via the NSR. According to Mariia Kobzeva, both states' adversarial relationships with U.S. military global presence, and U.S. trade tensions with China since 2016, have increased a mutual desire to balance

²⁸² Roscongress, "Arctic Territory of Dialogue International Arctic Forum," accessed September 25, 2020, <https://forumarctica.ru/en/>.

²⁸³ Roscongress, "Arctic Territory of Dialogue International Arctic Forum."

²⁸⁴ Bertelsen, "The GCC-Russia-China LNG Triangle," 484.

Eurasian power.²⁸⁵ This aspect of Sino-Russian partnership has most visibly manifested itself in a growing number of joint military exercises including eight of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)'s annual *Joint Sea* naval serials, three SCO-sponsored multi-disciplinary drills including the bilateral *Peace Mission*, and the 2018 Chinese participation in Russia's quadrennial *Vostok*.²⁸⁶ One unnamed 2016 naval exercise off Kamchatka occurred without prior U.S. knowledge, due to poor satellite coverage of certain Arctic areas.²⁸⁷ These exercises foreshadowed the June 2017 signing of a Sino-Russian "Military Cooperation Roadmap 2017-2020" and the October 2019 announcement of a joint collaboration for ballistic missile defense, which once operational, would inherently involve Arctic region monitoring, given U.S. ballistic missile trajectories.²⁸⁸ Although left unsaid in official announcements, melting ice across the NSR poses both a challenge and yet another potential future engagement platform in the form of intelligence-surveillance-and reconnaissance (ISR) sharing. Further military alliance building or even a mutual defense treaty, are very likely contingent on Russia's internal negotiation of its residual fear over Asian power imbalances.²⁸⁹ This includes

²⁸⁵ Kobzeva, "Strategic Partnership Setting for Sino-Russian Cooperation in Arctic Shipping," 8.

²⁸⁶ Kobzeva, "Strategic Partnership Setting for Sino-Russian Cooperation in Arctic Shipping," 10; Zi Yang, "Vostok 2018: Russia and China's Diverging Common Interests," *The Diplomat*, September 17, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/09/vostok-2018-russia-and-chinas-diverging-common-interests/>; State Council of Information Office, People's Republic of China, "A Quick Guide to SCO and its Military Cooperation," June 5, 2018, http://english.scio.gov.cn/infographics/2018-06/05/content_51673238.htm; Vasily Kashin, "The Current State of Russian-Chinese Defense Cooperation," *CNA*, August 2018, https://www.cna.org/CNA_files/PDF/DOP-2018-U-018184-Final.pdf.

²⁸⁷ Gronholt-Pedersen, "As the Arctic's Attractions Mount, Greenland is a Security Black Hole," *Reuters*, October 20, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-climate-change-greenland-security-ins/as-the-arctics-attractions-mount-greenland-is-a-security-black-hole-idUSKBN2750J6>.

²⁸⁸ D. D. Wu, "China and Russia Sign Military Cooperation Roadmap," *The Diplomat*, June 30, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/06/china-and-russia-sign-military-cooperation-roadmap/>; Michael Kofman, "The Emperor's League: Understanding Sino-Russian Defense Cooperation," *War on the Rocks*, August 6, 2020, <https://warontherocks.com/2020/08/the-emperors-league-understanding-sino-russian-defense-cooperation/>.

²⁸⁹ Kobzeva, "Strategic Partnership Setting for Sino-Russian Cooperation in Arctic Shipping," 2, 10.

concerns on dual-use naval infrastructure or weather monitoring systems that could be converted into surveillance platforms. In the short term, it is more likely the relationship will continue along its current exercise and technical sharing trajectory.

Even before its 2018 Arctic policy release, China actively promoted itself as a leader in the effort to grow Arctic “wisdom,” through numerous state-sponsored scientific expeditions.²⁹⁰ NSR development furthers this Arctic scientific leadership agenda, advances China’s international status, and in doing so puts it in position for greater Arctic influence. Several joint university projects exemplify this aspect of NSR cooperation. These include the China-Russia Arctic Research Center between the Qingdao-based National Laboratory for Marine Science and Technology and Moscow-based Shirshov Institute of Oceanology focused on using ice density studies to better predict seasonal navigability of the strait, and the Harbin Engineering University-Northern Federal University sponsored Russia-China Arctic Research Consortium that takes an economic approach to improving NSR management and technology sharing.²⁹¹ As in nearly all Chinese “science-diplomacy” forums, the premise behind both projects bridges environmental research with an underlying commercial motive.

Related to science, commerce, and security efforts are more tailored NSR partnerships requiring technological coordination in the areas of shipping, ship construction, engineering, and remote sensing.²⁹² These activities are further linked to the prevailing Arctic legal regimes, including UNCLOS and the IMO Polar Code. Chinese various sector expertise is supported by Russia’s 2013 Arctic Strategy, which points to

²⁹⁰ State Council Information Office, People’s Republic of China, “China’s Arctic Policy.”

²⁹¹ Gao and Erokhin, “China-Russia Collaboration in Arctic Shipping and Maritime Engineering,” 17.

²⁹² Gao and Erokhin, “China-Russia Collaboration in Arctic Shipping and Maritime Engineering,” 10.

international technological cooperation as the means to achieving its NSR goals.²⁹³

Shipping is considered China's most advantageous industry in terms of economic and future political influence, although it is not the only international actor involved in NSR transit.²⁹⁴ The NSR is a challenging maritime environment from both a logistics and environmental standpoint. Although on paper, it dramatically decreases the shipping time between northern European and northeastern Asian city-pairs, its draft limitations, crumbling Soviet-era port facilities, lack of search and rescue (SAR) or other marine shipping disaster response infrastructure, related insurance premiums, and seasonally arduous conditions cut down on the current numbers of international vessels able to routinely use the waterway.²⁹⁵ Additionally, Russian desire to nationalize the strait using its interpretation of UNCLOS Arctic 234 on traditionally ice-covered areas, has stirred concerns of additional shipping costs, perhaps in the form of icebreaker, pilotage, or other unique service fees.²⁹⁶

Despite, or perhaps as a reaction to these obstacles, China's economic and status gain vis-à-vis the NSR should not be in question. Russia's prioritization of NSR development at the highest levels of government and government-tied industry, creates a constant Chinese commercial advantage. In March 2018, President Putin set an official expectation that the NSR would host the transit of 80 million tons of cargo by 2025.²⁹⁷ Thus far, this goal has been troublesome to reach, with small domestic vessels still

²⁹³ Staun, "Russia's Strategy in the Arctic," 320.

²⁹⁴ Bertelsen and Gallucci, "The Return of China, Post-Cold War Russia, and the Arctic," 244.

²⁹⁵ Farré et al., "Commercial Arctic Shipping through the Northeast Passage," 299, 313-314; Zhang, Meng, and Zhang, "Is the Northern Sea Route Attractive to Shipping Companies?" 58-59; Staun, "A Two-Faced Russia?" 7.

²⁹⁶ Luna, "Russia, the Arctic and Northeast Asia," 123-124.

²⁹⁷ Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1833 *U.N.T.S.* 397, (December, 1982), retrieved from https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf; Staun, "A Two-Faced Russia? Civilian Interests and Great Power Politics in the High North," 7.

accounting for the majority of 2019's 26 million tons of cargo. However, Russia has every incentive to encourage increased Chinese and other extra-regional state use, especially for LNG shipping out of the Yamal Peninsula. An improvement was observed in a 29.5% increase in international shipping between 2018-2019, and a 17% growth thus far in 2020 including a slight rise in eastward-destined vessels.²⁹⁸ After ten years of growing its Arctic shipping competency, notably initiated through a training agreement with Russian shipping company Sovcomflot, China has yet to realize its own 2020 goal of using the NSR for 15% of all of its shipping.²⁹⁹ However, China has benefited from an additional comprehensive 2019 partnership between its primary carrier COSCO, Sovcomflot, and Novatek that launched the Marine Arctic Transport LLC. The company's business plan is to invest in logistics designed to improve movement of Russian fossil fuels to Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) states and enhance overall Asian-European trade.³⁰⁰ This places China in a position to influence not only NSR commerce, but trade relations between the East and West, a key tenet of the BRI. Even with the NSR's challenges, Brady cites the writings of Chinese Arctic-focused policy scholars, Guo Peiqing and Li Zhenfu, who urge state-owned corporations to increase use of Arctic shipping routes in order to "enhance [China's] national Arctic legitimacy."³⁰¹ Arctic legitimacy in this context representing an ability to sway regional policy towards Chinese interests.

²⁹⁸ Gao and Erokhin, "China-Russia Collaboration in Arctic Shipping and Maritime Engineering," 7; "Data Visualizations," Northern Sea Route Information Office, last modified September 16, 2020, <https://arctic-lio.com/>.

²⁹⁹ Blunden, "Geopolitics and the Northern Sea Route," 119; Sevastyanov and Kravchuk, "Russia's Policy to Develop Trans-Arctic Shipping Along the Northern Sea Route," 14.

³⁰⁰ Gao and Erokhin, "China-Russia Collaboration in Arctic Shipping and Maritime Engineering," 17.

³⁰¹ Brady, *China As a Polar Great Power*, 227.

China's expertise in ship construction and infrastructure development are also especially relevant to the NSR in the production of ice-capable vessels and port facilities. In both areas, Russia has again turned to China for assistance, using China Shipbuilding and Offshore International and Qingdao Beihai Shipbuilding Heavy Industry for construction of portions of its new ice-breaker shipyard, Zvezda, in 2016. South Korean companies have played a significant part in construction of Zvezda, but coordination appears to go directly through Russia rather than jointly with China.³⁰² As of 2019, Chinese companies invested over \$20 billion into 80 Russian port development projects, with state companies expected to be heavily involved in the critical expansion of deep-water port facilities in Kamchatka.³⁰³ Kamchatka is particularly relevant to a Russian shipping scheme to construct LNG transport facilities on either end of the NSR (the other facilities planned for Murmansk, Russia and Rostock, Germany), which would be used to transfer fuel from smaller NSR regional, ice-capable ships to larger international cargo vessels.³⁰⁴ Given the intimate relationship between Russian business and central government, and China's own SOE, these trade developments represents another peripheral Arctic governance prospect brought about by the NSR.

It must be noted that the Yamal LNG and NSR related energy related projects remain the most successful Sino-Russian joint endeavors to date. In their study, "Chinese Infrastructure Diplomacy in Russia: the Geopolitics of Project Type, Location, and Scale," Jia Fanqi and Mia Bennett determined that residual Russian distrust of China on its borders is subtly demonstrated by the success of energy related and interior

³⁰² Gao and Erokhin, "China-Russia Collaboration in Arctic Shipping and Maritime Engineering," 11.

³⁰³ Sevastyanov and Kravchuk, "Russia's Policy to Develop Trans-Arctic Shipping Along the Northern Sea Route," 16.

³⁰⁴ Harada, "Behind the Recent Acceleration of the Arctic Oil and Gas Development in Russia," 7.

infrastructure projects as compared to joint infrastructure and transport system construction along border areas. In addition to Yamal LNG, successful energy or mineral projects listed in their report include the Eastern Siberian-Pacific Ocean pipeline, Power of Siberia (PoS) natural gas pipeline, and an iron-ore rail line originating from Kimkano-Sutarsky. Other non-energy based, cross-border projects have been met with hurdles.³⁰⁵

China's role in using its Arctic "wisdom" to sidestep traditional territorial-based governance regimes reaches a critical junction when considering international ocean and shipping regulations. Specifically, legal scholars contend that the IMO's Polar Code and UNCLOS could be used by China to affect future Arctic governance. The Polar Code's operational framework avoids territorial jargon, inherently globalizing its regulations outside of established territory, much to China's advantage.³⁰⁶ China was notably a passive participant during international deliberations on the law, submitting proposals to the IMO that sought to lessen the code's environmental and shipbuilding requirements after its 2014 deadline had past.³⁰⁷ However, as Chinese ships transiting the NSR increase in number, China's dual roles as the world's leading merchant ship operator and builder—and thus one of the Polar Code's most prolific future constituents—have led some scholars to postulate that China could yet affect the law in its actual practice. This concept is sometimes referred to as "technopolitics," whereby the leaders in a specific technological sector are considered more influential than the states or regions in which that industry operates.³⁰⁸ This thesis contends that while operational exercise of the Polar

³⁰⁵ Fanqi Jia and Mia M. Bennett, "Chinese Infrastructure Diplomacy in Russia: the Geopolitics of Project Type, Location, and Scale," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 59, no. 3-4 (February 2019): 340, 368, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2019.1571371>.

³⁰⁶ Eiterjord, "Arctic Technopolitics and China's Reception of the Polar Code."

³⁰⁷ Eiterjord, "Arctic Technopolitics and China's Reception of the Polar Code."

³⁰⁸ Eiterjord, "Arctic Technopolitics and China's Reception of the Polar Code."

Code may result in its gradual evolution, there remains enough influence within the global shipping community irrespective of China —especially in northern European shipping powers like Norway—and territorial state influence to counter any significant deviation from established international law. Furthermore, the Arctic’s commercial-science based epistemic communities, sourced from stable, long-term adherents of liberal institutionalism likely serve as effective counterweights to any radical shifts. However, movements towards further globalization of Arctic governance systems are also embraced by a number of scientific and commercial stakeholders, and China’s continued involvement in these related Arctic forums place it in an advantageous position to shape any gradual changes to currently accepted institutional norms.

The use of UNCLOS to support individual state agendas is slightly more nuanced than the above Polar Code discussion, and may be even less likely to change with an increased Chinese Arctic presence. Russia uses UNCLOS to justify its territorial rights to the NSR, highlighting its cultural preference for exclusion. Yet, it is faced with a simultaneous desire to improve the NSR’s global commercial use. While China quietly joins with other international states in claiming the NSR as an international straight subject to freedom of navigation protections, it has no current incentive to actively protest Russia’s position.³⁰⁹ In fact, given its own contested territorial claims in the East China and South China Seas, China has equal incentive for respecting Russia’s national claim on the NSR.³¹⁰ Tying back to Arctic-related IR theory, the current NSR regime of de facto Russian control supports defensive realists’ argument that maintenance of the status

³⁰⁹ Gao and Erokhin, “China-Russia Collaboration in Arctic Shipping and Maritime Engineering,” 4-5.

³¹⁰ Peng and Wegge, “China and the Law of the Sea,” 300-302.

quo is preferred. Given that as Farré et al. posit, “commercial shipping and sustainable economic growth require a supportive, stable, and predictable governance system,”³¹¹ this thesis argues China will prioritize its advantageous NSR access and will not contest Russian regulations.

Russia’s claims to the seabed adjoining the NSR offer a final means for potential Chinese involvement in international Arctic deliberation. In 2001 and 2015, Russia submitted seabed claims to the CLCS for the Lomonosov and Mendeleev ridges. If approved, this would extend its economic exclusion zone (EEZ) to encompass 1.2 million square kilometers of the Arctic’s seafloor.³¹² The area of Russia’s submission encompasses portions of Denmark and Canada’s own claims. A CLCS decision will thus require significant arbitration, potentially necessitating additional scientific data to support individual state territories. Arctic seabed claims require state-of-the-art technology to access and map ice-covered areas of the Arctic Ocean. As of 2020, the multinational Seabed 2030 Project estimated that only 20% of the Arctic has been mapped, an increase since its 7% estimate in 2012.³¹³ A lack of detailed charts throughout the Arctic, including within territorial waters, has repercussions across the spectrum of Arctic motivations including climate science, resource exploitation, and shipping. China’s significant investment in polar science, including remote sensing technologies, make it a viable participant in the future politics of seabed arbitration. It is possible Russia and China could also collaborate on underwater fiber optic cable emplacement

³¹¹ Farré et al., “Commercial Arctic Shipping through the Northeast Passage,” 306.

³¹² Byers, “Cold, Dark, and Dangerous: International Cooperation in the Arctic and Space,” 33; Staun, “A Two-Faced Russia?” 8.

³¹³ Jakobsson et al., “The International Bathymetric Chart of the Arctic Ocean Version 4.0,” 1.

and deep seabed mining activities. Both of these activities have larger repercussions for China's BRI, and international deliberation on controversial seabed operations.

Historical Case Study: Great Britain's 19th Century Treaty Port System

Creating historical analogies that fit perfectly within contemporary contexts can be a perilous undertaking. A significant list of similarities exist between Great Britain's creation of a "treaty port" mercantile system in China, and China's own modern Arctic ambitions; however, differences remain and the comparative history is deserving of further study. The principle distinction is that while mid 19th century China was coerced into ceding portions of several of its coastal cities to Western powers in the Treaty of Nanking at the conclusion of the Opium Wars, modern Russia is in a far less vulnerable a position. In terms of coercive practice alone, one might find a better historical match in China's development of port infrastructure in Hambantota, Sri Lanka.³¹⁴ Nonetheless, China's 21st century BRI-related projects in the NSR do mirror similar practices at work in the 19th century. Furthermore, there are compelling links one can draw from China's own experience as a subject of the treaty port system, and its 21st century imposition of a version of this commercial structure on other states.³¹⁵ Much more could be written comparing the 19th and 21st century globalization practices of emerging and established great powers, or how contemporary great power aspirants model their own history. Therefore, this section represents only a brief synopsis of identified parallels between

³¹⁴ Lauren Frayer, "In Sri Lanka, China's Building Spree Is Raising Questions About Sovereignty," *NPR*, December 13, 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/12/13/784084567/in-sri-lanka-chinas-building-spree-is-raising-questions-about-sovereignty>.

³¹⁵ Anne Reinhardt, "Treaty Ports as Shipping Infrastructure," in *Treaty Ports in Modern China: Law, Land, and Power*, eds. Robert Bickers and Isabella Jackson (New York: Routledge, 2016), 101-102, accessed September 25, 2020, <https://books.google.com/books>.

Britain's treaty port system and China's own investment and technology-based approach to future NSR and Arctic governance.

China's BRI, and its Arctic extension, the Polar Silk Road, officially seeks to advantage China's global position through improved trade, communication, and related infrastructure development. This concept closely resembles what John Darwin states in his general description of the 19th century British System as an intention to "promote the integration of these widely separated places: commercially, strategically, politically...diffusing British beliefs and ideas – culturally as well."³¹⁶ As discussed above, modern China is pursuing a foothold in each in the form of joint state-industry commercial projects like Yamal LNG, security-related engagements, and strategic-level joint policy statements and agreements. Even in external foreign power-wary Russia, it is inevitable that elements of Chinese culture, especially business practices, are also shared in the process through aforementioned knowledge sharing networks.

Much like China's contemporary entreaties, 19th century Britain relied on technological advances, new commercial partnerships, infrastructure development, and advantageous legal interpretations. Britain's mastery of the latest technology, like the telegraph and undersea communications cables, was essential to linking its distant commercial territories back to London's commercial center.³¹⁷ This "cognitive territory" extended as well to the social and physical sciences, which were used as political tools to favorably influence Britain's standing over its subject states.³¹⁸ Similar to our study on Russian and Chinese state-run industry and their influence on "soft" Arctic strategy, 19th

³¹⁶ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 2.

³¹⁷ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 5.

³¹⁸ Fan, "Victorian Naturalists in China," 25.

century Britain sought to establish unique new commercial arrangements within its treaty ports. This was most apparent in the Imperial Maritime Customs Service, which though officially operated by China's Foreign Service, was in reality a British orchestrated effort to advantage Western-bound trade through tariffs controls.³¹⁹ Involved in this new treaty port organization were domestically-sourced middlemen who provided a necessary link between Britain's commercial interests and 19th century China's regional and central government.³²⁰ One could argue Russia's energy industry oligarchs function in much the same way, leveraging commercial relationships with their Chinese counterparts to effect Kremlin policy.

Shipping and infrastructure —and their ties to law — were essential to the 19th century treaty port system and Britain's creation of a "commercial republic" rather than a territory-based empire.³²¹ Robert Bickers notes the relationship between the construction of "seemingly mundane harbours, jetties, and warehouses" in treaty ports and British achievement of global commercial hegemony. This created a lucrative environment for Britain, while simultaneously providing China with needed infrastructure developments. Bickers states, "the complexities of infrastructural developments, and thereby of processes of globalization...could serve the needs and strategic objectives of both colonial powers and of states resisting colonial power, and that while they served local and national purposes they also formed part of an increasingly global infrastructure."³²² It

³¹⁹ Wolfgang Keller, Ben Li, and Carol H. Shiue, "Shanghai's Trade, China's Growth: Continuity, Recovery, and Change since the Opium Wars," *IMF Economic Review* 61, no. 2 (2013): 342, <https://doi.org/10.3386/w17754>.

³²⁰ Kaori Abe, "Intermediary Elites in the Treaty Port World: Tong Mow-Chee and His Collaborators in Shanghai, 1873-1897," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 25, no. 3 (07, 2015): 462, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186315000139>.

³²¹ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 10.

³²² Robert Bickers, "Infrastructural Globalization: Lighting the China Coast, 1860s-1930s," *The Historical Journal* 56, no. 2 (June, 2013): 455, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X13000010>.

could be argued the contemporary Russian need for external development assistance has creates a very similar circumstance. Like our discussion on the potential use of the IMO Polar Code and UNCLOS to gradually increase influence over future Arctic governance, British shipping companies also used their commercial weight to affect the outcomes of laws pertaining to treaty ports, including the Treaty of Nanking. This “right of extraterritoriality”³²³ discussed at length by Jeremy Taylor, finds contemporary relevancy in modern Arctic-related legal statutes that benefit non-regional states like China.

Finally, as Blunden’s recalling of Mahanian seapower theory describes, there is an enduring causal relation between merchant and naval interests. Although modern Sino-Russian security ties are still in development and Russia remains wary of expanding Chinese military power, an increasingly greater merchant footprint in the NSR evokes Mahan’s historical exhortation that “armed shipping must follow the peaceful vessels of commerce.”³²⁴ Russia would almost certainly not accept a permanent or otherwise unfettered Chinese naval presence in its waters. However, the mere presence of future Chinese naval vessels in the NSR, following in the path of its own commercial vessels would not be insignificant, demonstrating to a global audience China’s growing reach. The PLA(N)’s 2015-2016 northern European port calls certainly established a precedence for northern sea Chinese presence. This is yet another shared element of the treaty port system. While 19th century China forbade Britain from establishing military facilities at

³²³ Jeremy E. Taylor, “The Bund: Littoral Space of Empire in the Treaty Ports of East Asia,” *Social History* 27, no. 2 (May, 2002): 132, <http://proxy.library.jhu.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/docview/223518687?accountid=11752>.

³²⁴ Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783*, 12th ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1918), 82, accessed September 28, 2020, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.49015000108135&view=1up&seq=112&q1=to%20which%20the%20armed%20shipping%20must%20follow%20the%20peaceful%20vessels%20of%20commerce>.

its treaty ports, the projection of power made visible by visiting naval ships were certainly felt by its population.³²⁵

Analysis: Greater Arctic Themes and the NSR

Several Arctic motifs are again present within this study of the NSR. These include the growth of knowledge-based systems of influence rather than sovereign ownership over Arctic territory. As our study of the 19th century British “World System” demonstrated, developing or even established global hegemonies do not always require physical territory to exert influence and commercial advantage. Their singular influence is rather obtained through “complex governance,” in which technology, communications, infrastructure, science, and economy all interact.³²⁶ In the NSR, this knowledge territory is the result of intensive efforts by Chinese merchant shipping, scientists, and engineers to demonstrate China’s Arctic competencies in rather rapid form. This has extended even further to include examples of nascent military strategic partnerships that are of significant concern to the U.S.

State reactions to exclusivity, or rejection from international organizations or communities, is another multifaceted theme exemplified in NSR developments. The post 2014 U.S. led sanctions on Russia can be directly linked to Russia’s need to court new partners in Asia, likely an unforeseen or unintended consequence. Russia is likewise engaged in exclusivity via its national jurisdiction claims over the NSR and adjoining seabed. While it is too early to determine the final direction of these policies, it appears that in the near term, China will continue to find it advantageous to ignore its quiet opposition to Russia’s claims, provided Russia continues to incentivize its NSR use.

³²⁵ Taylor, “The Bund,” 137.

³²⁶ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 1, 5.

Russia's future reaction to the CLCS's ruling on the Lomonosov and Mendeleev ridges will be a significant moment in Arctic history. Russian acceptance of the international court's findings, would support scholars and policy makers who have argued that the Arctic represents one of the globe's unique regions that respects institutionalism and "complex interdependence."³²⁷ A negative response, guided by adherents to Russia's competing realist political-culture, will have significant adverse effects on the stability of Arctic governance. China is positioning itself to benefit from either outcome.

Finally, NSR development represents the dramatic change of Arctic related foreign policy and interaction from a regional to international scope. The NSR's role in Chinese global strategy, as an alternative transport route should Malacca, Suez, Panama and other sea lane of communication chokepoints be comprised is one example. So too is the increase of external diplomatic factors, such as the Crimea sanctions and general East-West relations that have impacted NSR development. Even the economic effects of the 2020 global Covid-19 pandemic have temporarily altered appraisals of NSR energy investments and related shipping.³²⁸ As climate change increases seasonal access to the NSR, additional international stakeholders will continue to emerge. These will include shipping companies, infrastructure developers, environmentalists, additional international legal scrutiny, and transnational criminal syndicates among others. Development of deep-water ports on either side of the NSR as proposed for Murmansk and Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky will also increase overall international focus on the region's potential.³²⁹ As Rasmus Bertelsen writes, "Arctic climate change is an instance of globalization...caused

³²⁷ Byers, "Cold, Dark, and Dangerous: International Cooperation in the Arctic and Space," 32.

³²⁸ Gao and Erokhin, "China-Russia Collaboration in Arctic Shipping and Maritime Engineering," 15.

³²⁹ Sevastyanov and Kravchuk, "Russia's Policy to Develop Trans-Arctic Shipping Along the Northern Sea Route," 2.

far south in centers of population and economic activity, with amplified effects in the Arctic.”³³⁰ These effects pose global threats and promise, driving Arctic focus, expansion, and attitudes towards governance.

Conclusion

In 2013, when China first formally entered Arctic geopolitics through its admission as an AC Observer, conjecture abounded over its intended regional role. Literature published in response to China’s 2018 Arctic Policy white paper offered a wide spectrum of possibilities. In observing China’s subsequent rise as a “Near Arctic State” from a wider lens, one discovers the realities of China’s Arctic role differ geographically. A spectrum of influence methodology can be seen in China’s more cautious, incremental and admittedly outsider status in its AC Observer position; the peripheral growth of epistemic community forums and infrastructure developments with individual Nordic states and other actors; and more strategic alignment with Russia over the NSR. This chapter argues that of these, the NSR region stands as the first major regional project in which China has been named as an essential, multifaceted Arctic institution — most notably by Russia, an historically exclusive and distrustful Arctic geopolitical actor.

Examination of respective Chinese and Russian political-anthropology provides essential context to Sino-Russian collaboration over the NSR. Specifically, Russia’s historic wariness of foreign powers, especially in regards to its borders and resources, adds significant weight to its decision to collaborate with China. While the Sino-Russian partnership is not without potential rifts, and certainly advanced more rapidly following

³³⁰ Bertelsen, “The International Political Systemic Context of Arctic Marine Resource Governance,” 7.

the 2014 annexation of Crimea, its development has steadily progressed over the last two decades. For China, joint partnership in the NSR provides numerous avenues for achieving greater influence in Eurasian and Arctic governance, while expanding new energy and shipping access. Most importantly, the collaboration features strategic-level agreements that combine the goals of the BRI, China's principle national development policy, with Russia's equivalent national and regional programs. The NSR also serves as a focal point for high-level commercial-science forums, which will likely become relevant to already strengthening security engagements. Additionally, NSR operations and related dialogues provides permissible environments for China's furthering of "cognitive territory"³³¹ via demonstration of shipping, infrastructure, and polar science proficiencies. The latter activities' potential "techno-political"³³² effects on the IMO Polar Code and UNCLOS legal regimes, remain unclear. However, given that the laws inherently internationalize an otherwise nation-state dominated Arctic governance regime, China's Arctic growing presence will inevitably increase interaction with the actual instrumentation of both laws as well as the laws' other constituents. Yet again, China's thorough involvement in multi-disciplinary knowledge networks, or epistemic communities, places it in an advantageous position to effect its desired change. Furthermore, China may yet be involved in further joint exploitive activities with Russia, should Russia be granted access to its seabed claims. Either way, China will likely become one of the laws' primary extra-regional actors, or possibly a commercial beneficiary, following the conclusion of international seabed arbitration.

³³¹ Fan, "Victorian Naturalists in China," 25.

³³² Eiterjord, "Arctic Technopolitics and China's Reception of the Polar Code."

Many of the activities surrounding China's role in NSR development have historic precedence in Great Britain's 19th century globalization efforts. The establishment of treaty ports along China's coast in the aftermath of the Opium Wars demonstrate that global hegemonies do not always seek central control over territory, but rather accept more complex, commercial-based spheres of influence. This case study highlighted several parallels to China's modern intentions and strategy in the NSR region. Additionally, the treaty port system identifies a topic for future research regarding the link between China's own subjugation under the treaty port system and political-anthropological origins for its own 21st century implementation of similar constructs on other states.

In summary, this chapter once again underlines several ever-present themes in modern Arctic geopolitics. These include the emergence of knowledge versus territorial-based regional influence architecture, consequences for exclusionary practice among states, and the ever-globalizing character of the Arctic. Several sub-themes are also present when examining the NSR region. Specifically, the effects of political-anthropology on state policy making, and the seemingly paradoxical yet often integrated narratives of the Arctic as a region for exploitation, competition, environmental sustainability, and peaceful cooperation. While China and Russia's realpolitik remains, NSR development thus far continues to demonstrate unprecedented collaboration in the high north.

Conclusion

It has been just two years since China released its formal Arctic policy, and seven since its acceptance as an AC Observer. As the preceding chapters illuminate, China's Arctic activities are already extensive and complex. Its regional enterprises range from growth in academic writing and polar scientific investments, bilateral scientific and commercial relationship building with each established Arctic state and epistemic communities representing state and non-state interests, and nascent influence in larger systems of Arctic governance in parallel with more global-scale administration. China has relentlessly pursued all of this on the periphery of established Arctic influence structures, despite a short regional history, lack of sovereign territorial holdings, an Observer role on the AC, and residual mistrust by some Arctic territorial states. This thesis puts forth a theory that exclusion, designed to limit the participation of outsiders in international organizations or other multilateral engagement venues in regions experiencing rapid globalization, unintentionally creates peripheral influence systems. Those states, or aspirational states, excluded from liberal governance regimes will devise alternative influence architecture on the 'borders' of these systems. In this context, the definition of borders becomes vague. Aspects of this theory have been previously defined with characterizations such as "flexible regional,"³³³ "science diplomacy,"³³⁴ "cognitive territory,"³³⁵ or "techno-politics."³³⁶ However, as seen in the Arctic, the process of exclusion-peripheralization represents all of these concepts and more.

³³³ Koivurova, "The Arctic Council: A Testing Ground for New International Environmental Governance," 140-142.

³³⁴ Lanteigne, "'Have You Entered the Storehouses of the Snow?'" 121.

³³⁵ Fan, "Victorian Naturalists in China," 25.

³³⁶ Eiterjord, "Arctic Technopolitics and China's Reception of the Polar Code."

China is not an Arctic monolith as sometimes painted by liberal and realist IR theorists. While this thesis leans towards categorizing China's longterm northern strategy in terms of state self-interest, China's means of attaining a permanent, advantageous Arctic role involves more than any one IR theory captures. Portions of its 2018 Arctic policy, including China's open acknowledgement of the existing liberal order, related international laws, and national sovereignties are likely transparent. Much of its Arctic scientific research, mentioned multiple times in its policy, is driven by a twofold desire to be recognized as a global leader in climate science and to protect its own domestic interests with respect to climate change. China's participation in established systems like the AC, and the Arctic's other peripheral forums, does not portend an aggressive revisionist strategy. Yet, it would be naive to conclude China does not have larger Arctic ambitions that tend towards the *realpolitik*. As seen in its Greenland and Russian entreaties, and more subtly within other regional science diplomacy based agreements, China is actively looking for Arctic commercial opportunities and strategic influence avenues, often approached in the guise of Arctic advocacy. From a cynical perspective, environmental and human security concerns appear to be a popular rhetorical currency used in various forums, nominally promoting Arctic issue awareness, yet focusing on more exploitive underlying goals. One cannot view China's culturally-tailored diplomatic presence in Greenland for example without comparison to China's own domestic human rights record toward ethnic minorities and political dissidents or its exploitive practices in the Indian Ocean and Africa. The same goes for the historical and cultural mistrust between Russia and China that is nonetheless taking a backseat to the current economic and strategic expediency of developing the NSR region. This thesis began with Fridtjof

Nansen's famous appeal for international cooperation over a subjugated environmental space. With climate change forever altering the Arctic's physical territory, China is likewise manipulating international behavior in the region, beyond traditional territorial boundaries. The final consequences of China's ascendancy are not yet clear. However, this thesis sought to contribute to prediction on what the coming ice-free decades will present, and how established governance precedences might be altered by new Arctic actors. Underlying this depiction of a changing Arctic geopolitical dynamic is an appeal to policy makers to remain engaged and prioritize focus on the region.

The first chapter drew a comparison between the last two decades of Chinese unilateral and bilateral development growth and the AC's own evolving membership, in order to determine the AC's continued relevancy vis-à-vis a rising China. The study found that China is heavily involved in establishing itself as a credible, competent, and "respectful major country" in Arctic geopolitics. China's approach is varied, ranging from simple branding within its "Near-Arctic State" moniker to more nuanced, Constructivist-based "norm entrepreneurship" where heavy investment in polar science and infrastructure development is designed to promote bilateral agreements with AC member states. Chapter 1 furthermore determined China is likely to continue to view cooperation within and outside the AC as one source of strategic legitimacy. Meanwhile, with the recent inclusion of environmental and transportation sector NGOs, the AC will largely continue to function relatively effectively if not increase in international value, given its attempt at scoping beyond its historical focus on environmental sustainability. However, alternative regional forums that better reflect widening interpretations of Arctic development and sustainability are growing, and China is heavily involved in promoting

and interacting within these knowledge network constructs. Increasing Arctic investment by global interests over the coming decades may require an updated, more inclusive and comprehensive organizational model similar to the Antarctic Treaty system. The Arctic and Antarctic differ significantly, but one aspect of the Antarctic regime is particularly applicable: it is designed to prevent territorial state dominance over related policy, placing influence instead on individual state scientific contribution rather than on territorial sovereignty. Such a dynamic would be welcomed by China and a growing host of new regional powers, yet would challenge the territorial status quo of Arctic littoral states.

The Greenland case study, presented in Chapter 2, illustrated the Arctic's changing regional to international focus and overall framing in relation to U.S., Chinese, Danish, indigenous, and to some extent other IO interests. It also drew attention to the historically-excluded indigenous populations' own methods of altering the status quo, which includes gravitation towards regional outsiders like China. Using a political-anthropology approach to assist in predicting which entities might occupy an advantaged position in Greenland following its eventual independence, the study finds contrasts between China, the U.S., and Denmark's engagement strategies. China has made significant inroads into Greenland, leveraging relative cultural awareness; tangible infrastructure project proposals that would develop air, sea port, and communications facilities; and education development that closely align with Greenland's needs. A non-military focused, infrastructure investment approach aligns in many respects with Greenland's expressed desires to exploit its mineral resources to aid in achieving independence. The U.S. and NATO partner Denmark have long viewed Greenland in

purely strategic terms, given its optimal position in the center of the North Atlantic. This strategic perspective ignores the complexities of the island's Inuit culture, especially pacifist ideology, and the population's overall anti-Dane sentiment.

There are signs the U.S. is evolving towards a more Greenland-friendly policy design, although the U.S.'s own Arctic prioritization shows great irregularity and its strategic end state is believed by most Greenlanders to still be self-centered. Since the 2009 signing of the Greenland-Denmark Self-Government Agreement and 2013 Large Scale Projects Act, Greenland's independence movement has changed from one principally motivated by "moral," anti-colonial beliefs to one focused on sustainable development.³³⁷ It is likely too early to say how these dynamics will result in future influence; however, this chapter concludes that close policy attention to Greenland's actual needs—and bypassing Denmark in future negotiations—likely holds the keys to success. China has already cautiously attempted this, and was rewarded by Greenland with unprecedented mining access and additional infrastructure development opportunities. However, the recent joint efforts by Denmark and the U.S. to suppress Chinese activities on the island continues to demonstrate a colonial attitude to a population striving for full independence. The exclusion-peripheralization dynamic in Greenland is thus more complicated than simply degrading Chinese influence, Greenlanders too remain partial outsiders in engineering their own future. Future interactions between these two unique excluded entities, as well as a host of other potential collaborators such as the EU and other NATO states, are worthy of greater study.

³³⁷ Sejersen, "Brokers of Hope," 1.

The final chapter addresses Arctic exclusion-peripheralization theory in two ways. First as an unintended consequence of U.S.-led offensive diplomatic action occurring outside of the region that nonetheless affects the Arctic, and secondly within inter-state, regional relations. Using political anthropology as a contextual background, this chapter demonstrates the significance of contemporary Sino-Russian Arctic partnership, brought about by mutual Western distrust, and catalyzed by U.S.-led sanctions imposed following Crimea's annexation. Despite residual wariness on China's growing regional and global power, and Russia's persistent exclusionary tendencies, this chapter found cooperative behavior between China and Russia is likely to strengthen as long as both states continue to see strategic and commercial promise in the relationship. Once again, China's use of various instruments of influence is succeeding in changing established Arctic norms, granting it peripheral entry into an otherwise exclusionary Russian cultural and political environment. Chapter 3 concludes that it is in Russia's NSR region where China has most clearly achieved its Arctic end state, establishing itself as a crucial asset across vital commercial sectors, and readying the geopolitical landscape for an even greater lucrative and influential future. This includes potential participation in more global discourse over international sea laws and undersea territorial expansion, among other polar issues that will increasingly arise with environmental change. This chapter's inclusion of the historical cameo of the British treaty port system, ironically set in 19th century China, demonstrates an historical precedent of how world powers construct and maintain 'territory' outside of areas of sovereign control. In the 21st century geopolitical landscape, China is now working in much the same way, perhaps aided in small part by its own experience as a subject of 19th century manipulation by extra-territorial powers.

Numerous conclusions can be drawn from these chapter's findings, assisting in greater Arctic policy development and furthering future studies in Arctic international affairs. These include analysis on theoretical alternative governance structures, the use of political-anthropology to steer regional engagement strategies, and potential state leveraging of both sides of the exclusion-peripheralization equation. As the Arctic becomes more globalized in the coming decades, scholars caution the AC and laws governing the region may be incapable of preventing commercial and other exploitive practices from overwhelming the far north. They point to the Antarctic Treaty as a potential model for a new governance regime that could add further binding protections to the open, 2.8 million square kilometer Arctic Ocean, as well as better define former historically ice-covered areas currently included under UNCLOS Article 234. As Chapter 1 discusses, the Antarctic differs significantly from the Arctic in terms of basic geography, commercial relevancy, lack of indigenous peoples, and well-established national territories. However, as a myriad of political, economic, legal, and security concerns begin to routinely enter the Arctic space, existing regional governance systems appear insufficient to handle the demand. Oran Young, perhaps the most prolific scholar assessing the AC's continued relevancy, sums up future concerns in his statement, "the Arctic Council is too big to handle some problems, yet too small to handle others."³³⁸ Young introduces several limitations to initiating an Arctic Treaty modeled after the Antarctic's system. First among these is the current and persistent objection of the Arctic-5, whose sovereignty and influence are threatened by such an internationalized concept.

³³⁸ Oran R. Young, "The Shifting Landscape of Arctic Politics: Implications for International Cooperation," *The Polar Journal* 6, no. 2 (November, 2016): 212, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2154896X.2016.1253823>.

Young concludes that a “regime complex” combining existing sector and issue-specific organizations or laws, and most importantly offering new regional actors a more proactive voice, may be a more appropriate fit.³³⁹ However, the challenge of negotiating established states’ exclusionary motivations persists.

This thesis contributes to both sides of the debate over the merits of using an Antarctic Treaty model to improve Arctic governance. However, it contends establishing an appropriately sized and representative central entity to synchronize the individual motivations of a regime complex across the Arctic space, would be highly difficult. In addition to Young’s list, this thesis promotes counterarguments that an Arctic Treaty might also be limited by its binding nature as compared to the AC’s current “soft” law advocacy approach,³⁴⁰ effective enforcement of such a treaty’s numerous provisions across such an arduous and already contested environment, and the objections of indigenous groups and other sustainable development stakeholders to treaties preventing commercial activity. In addition to adding more robust environmental protections to the open Arctic Ocean, a major theoretical upside to the establishment of an Arctic Treaty would be its more egalitarian approach to influence, seen already in more fragmented peripheral structures and epistemic communities. The Antarctic Treaty was designed to do just this, elevating scientific contribution rather than state power or territorial holdings as the primary metric for state primacy. A similarly-engineered system could perhaps mitigate the peripheral dispersement of Arctic influence, currently seen in development of new forums and bilateral agreements outside of the AC with varying influences on

³³⁹ Young, “The Shifting Landscape of Arctic Politics,” 217-218, 220.

³⁴⁰ Byers, “Cold, Dark, and Dangerous: International Cooperation in the Arctic and Space,” 39-40.

state policies. Unlike the Antarctic; however, an Arctic system would need to include commercial interests to be accepted by the majority of party states and indigenous groups. Inclusion also might aid in improving commercial project transparency, and ideally in better regulation of such activities.

Chapter 2 and 3's political-anthropology studies introduce more subtle elements for consideration in policy development. In the Greenland example, this thesis noted the U.S.'s belated recognition of Greenland's culturally-based independence needs versus tailored and sensitive Chinese approaches. The U.S. must recognize leadership in the Arctic encompasses all of its own traditional frames: human and environmental security, economic development, international institutionalism, and strategic territory. The U.S.'s April 2020 aid package to Greenland and previous Obama Administration-era efforts to include Greenland in regional security and scientific engagements are steps in the right direction. The 2020 aid package comes in parallel with the establishment of a new U.S. consulate in Nuuk and nominally focuses on infrastructure, education, and resource development. However, given that the funds were funneled to the U.S. State Department, rather than provided directly to Greenland itself, makes predicting future influence outcomes more difficult, especially given the precedence of inconsistent U.S. Arctic prioritization.³⁴¹ Consequences of U.S. and Danish exclusionary practices towards recent Chinese development efforts in Greenland are likely too early to predict. However, from Greenland's perspective, such external and post-colonial influence in their affairs contributes to longstanding mistrust over each states' intentions and support to its

³⁴¹ Martin Breum, "The US Aid Package to Greenland Marks a New Chapter in a Long, Complex Relationship," *Arctic Today*, April 29, 2020, <https://www.arctictoday.com/the-us-aid-package-to-greenland-is-a-new-chapter-in-a-long-complex-relationship/>.

independence. China meanwhile, appears willing to make concessions regarding its strategic goals for the island, overtly maintaining its “peaceful rise” and minimizing potential controversies, while still benefitting in the short term from its Greenland mining investments.

Exclusion-peripheralization theory is also applicable to development of international and U.S. policy for Russia and China. Post-Crimea sanctions and other punitive diplomatic measures are arguably merited, allowing for enforcement of international behavioral norms. However, their long-term effects upon various international systems are worthy of additional study. Western sanctions are just one recent driver of growing Sino-Russian partnership in the Arctic and Eurasian theaters. Much of this relationship is affected by the state of respective bilateral relations with the U.S. The ongoing trade war with China is another factor incentivizing new partnerships that are less advantageous to the U.S. America’s Indo-Pacific theater alliances and longstanding military presence certainly represent other, less flexible factors. The Arctic offers opportunities to improve U.S. relationships with both states, while simultaneously maintaining more stringent national strategies in other regions. As noted in Chapter 3, Russia’s domestic institutions focusing on the Arctic contrast significantly with its more aggressive central political forces. Russia’s engrained Arctic institutionalism thus continues to offer potential paths for proactive engagement and cooperation, potentially even as a “track two” diplomatic avenue for negotiating more controversial subjects like arms control. Russia’s traditional exclusionary state character could also be used to the U.S.’s advantage if a future need arises to counter China in the region. On the flip side of the exclusion-peripheralization coin, the U.S. should take a more active role in Arctic

peripheral forums in which China participates, while improving its own standing in the AC. China's use of science-diplomacy will likely continue to serve as one of its methods for gaining greater Arctic influence, and the U.S. cannot adequately monitor this by taking an outside or passing interest in Arctic affairs. Partnership or joint participation in climate science related Arctic activities for example would assist larger transparency building efforts, while furthering global security interests.

This thesis sought to provide a wide-ranging discussion on contemporary Arctic international affairs; however, it is far from comprehensive. Potential for updated case studies abound in this newly globalizing region. Each bilateral agreement between China and regional states, surveyed in Chapter 1, offers an opportunity for examination of the continuing evolution of Arctic geopolitics at either micro or macro scales. The aspirations of the region's indigenous peoples can certainly not be presumed to be monolithic, and their very real human security concerns vis-à-vis environmental, commercial, and governance changes merit continual academic and policy redressal. China is not the only extra-regional state increasing its influence in the Arctic. While thus far it appears to embrace the Arctic's status quo of cooperative behavior, in most policy rhetoric and in actions, further study on the interactions between it and other emerging Arctic powers deserves greater scrutiny than afforded here. Arctic political anthropology offers yet more avenues for research, especially in how it can be used to craft better policy or diplomatic approaches towards state and non-state Arctic entities. History's lessons continue to be applicable to modern globalization. As the U.S. and international community continue to monitor China's growth, further study on different forms of 'empire', and the origins of China's own concept of globalization are worthy of detailed scrutiny. A wealth of

literature exists exploring historical aspects of international political economy, but more could be done in finding additional analogies to contemporary Arctic geopolitics.

Despite a relative wealth of English language academic and policy literature on the Arctic, including those based on Chinese, Inuit, and Russian primary sources, this study was contextually limited to English only journals. Some reports produced by Chinese and Russian scholarship are not published in English journals, or for a Western audience, and more can be done to bring these to an international audience. Updated studies, similar to those done previously by Babin and Lasserre, Ping and Lanteigne, and Kossa³⁴² analyzing the relationship between Chinese polar investment and larger strategic intentions would also be beneficial. As addressed in Chapter 2, this thesis's language and cultural context limitations also extends to other groups like the Arctic's indigenous peoples. While a variety of English language articles, based on interviews of Greenland's political elites or polling data, were used to produce the background for Greenland's independence movement, this thesis does not consider these a definitive compilation of all Inuit perspectives, and certainly not the entire Arctic indigenous diaspora. With the combined forces of climate and geopolitical change already affecting Arctic indigenous communities, more should be done to bring their very real human security plight to the forefront of policy discussion.

In regards to climate change and related geopolitical conditions, it is important to underline that timelines for events included here are nearly impossible to accurately predict. This study is based on the most recent studies given credibility through inclusion

³⁴² Babin and Lasserre, "Asian States at the Arctic Council"; Ping and Lanteigne, "China's Developing Arctic Policies: Myths and Misconceptions;" Kossa, "China's Arctic Engagement: Domestic Actors and Foreign Policy."

in U.S. policy documents. These forecast the occurrence of significant environmental change in the Arctic over the next quarter century. While related human behavioral changes are already accelerating, other aspects of Arctic geopolitical development, such as monumental changes in global governance, may take much longer depending on various climate change factors, and will require continuous redressal.

This study focused on China's Arctic rise, and from an examination of solely regional data, furthered a theory of exclusion-peripheralization. However, such a theory requires much more evidence along a global-scale before it could be regarded as widely applicable. Exclusion-peripheralization theory is also based on state reaction to physical, territorial-based practices, but as discussed, territory can represent more than simply sovereign lands and waterways. Therefore, future studies involving exclusion-peripheralization theory should examine examples of both physical and knowledge or commercial-based 'territories' and related international influence structures.

We end our discussion with several questions that will continue to evolve along with Arctic human and physical change. How will science or knowledge-based 'territory' supplant traditional concepts of territorial-based legitimacy in international governance systems in the Arctic and elsewhere? How might political anthropology shape future interactions between established and emerging states in the far north? And finally, how will the cyclic process of Arctic globalization continue to be manifested? All of these play into an enduring Arctic motif as a region of complex interests, specifically of exploitation versus sustainability and competition versus cooperation. This thesis's presentation of case studies on contemporary Sino-Nordic, Inuit, and Russian collaboration demonstrated these phenomena within a larger international backdrop,

including the U.S. This thesis concludes that China's Arctic actions, exemplified by its investment in polar science, infrastructure and maritime agreements with individual Arctic states, and general norm-construction, are designed to establish a lasting, albeit non-territorial presence that will shape the Arctic and international politics for decades to come. Simply excluding this emerging actor will continue to result in greater peripheral systems of influence. It is far more advantageous to acknowledge this changing geopolitical region, and astutely engage with China and other emerging Arctic powers. Disregarding the new face of the Arctic avoids the promises of Fridtjof Nansen's appeal for international cooperation, and ignores modern analysis on the region's unique ability to inspire peaceful discourse even among otherwise adversarial nations.

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Curriculum Vitae

Daniel Friedman was born in Baltimore, Maryland on August 29, 1986. He attended Fordham University in the Bronx, New York where he received Bachelor of Arts degrees in History and Anthropology in 2009. Upon graduation, he was commissioned as an active duty U.S. naval officer, serving first as a Surface Warfare Officer before transitioning into the Naval Intelligence Community. He pursued a Masters of Arts in Government with a Concentration in Global Security Studies while stationed at the U.S. Defense Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Accounting Agency (DPAA) between 2018-2020, where he researched and planned underwater recovery missions for our nation's fallen. He undertook this Masters in order to better serve the interests of the U.S. Navy, contribute to bringing further attention to the Arctic's evolving geopolitical environment, and as a personal academic challenge. He resides in Alexandria, Virginia and can be reached at dsfriedman18@gmail.com.